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ABSTRACT

The study examines data on the current LD (learning disability) population in the School District of Philadelphia. Data were drawn from files of demographic and achievement figures, individual special education files, and interviews with psychologists, instructional advisors, parents, and teachers. Findings are presented in terms of four major topics: demography (proportion of students by age, distribution by race and sex, attendance data); selection practices and characteristics of LD students (summary of interviews, identification characteristics); characteristics of LD students (initial screening checklist, students' feelings of responsibility for achievement); and parent responses from mail and telephone surveys. Among findings are that the LD population is increasing rapidly, the largest proportion by age tends to be concentrated at the junior high level, specific criteria for LD were generally absent, differences in degree of inappropriate behavior could account for differences in full time and resource room assignments for elementary students; and parents were quite favorably disposed toward the LD program. Appended are sample comments on students recommended for special education by school personnel in eight districts and summaries of interviews with psychologists and instructional advisors. (CL)

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STATUS REPORT OF THE LEARNING DISABILITIES PROGRAM

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS AND PRACTICES

1983 - 1984

Special Education Research and Evaluation Unit

May, 1984
Report No. 8431

DIVISION OF PRIORITY OPERATIONS EVALUATION SERVICES
OFFICE OF PLANNING, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

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Also, special thanks to our technical support people who helped with computer file manipulations, to Leah Parness, whose help and suggestions in the typing were most helpful, and to Ed O'Steen whose work on the graphs made them much easier to read.

STATUS REPORT OF THE LEARNING DISABILITIES PROGRAM

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INTRODUCTION

Current research and expert opinion about Learning Disabilities has shown across the nation that definitions are not clear, formulae and procedures for identifying Learning Disabled students are diverse, and there are rapid increases in the population of Learning Disabled students. The School District of Philadelphia has not avoided the consequences of this state of affairs. The School District provides service to special education students for the City and County of Philadelphia and its public and non-public school students. In order to bring more clarity to this situation, the Executive Directors of the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation and of the Division of Special Education determined that a status study should be conducted to develop a comprehensive picture of the population and current practices. Based upon the findings, issues could be discussed with reference to common facts, figures, and perceptions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to gather data from a variety of sources to describe the current Learning Disabled (LD) population, to find out whether they return to regular education, what criteria are used in assigning or reassigning students to one of three types of programs, and what teachers do to help students make progress. It was also to obtain opinions of parents to determine how they viewed the program as a service to their children, and to obtain data about the effectiveness of the programs.

Pertinent Definitions

1. The School District of Philadelphia, which serves all public school students in the City and County, is also the Intermediate Unit for the County, and is thus responsible for carrying out State and Federal regulations and for administering programs serving all Special Education students in the City. Eligible students residing in the City who attend

non-public schools (primarily the Archdiocesean schools which parallel the public schools throughout the City) are served. The School District of Philadelphia is subdivided into seven administrative subdistricts, each with its own administrative leadership. These districts are numbered 1 through 8, excluding 3.

2. The definition* of Learning Disabilities which will serve as a reference for issues examined in the study includes the following points.

- A deficiency in the acquisition of basic learning skills, including but not limited to, the ability to reason, think, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations
- Learning disorders which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or other handicaps or mental retardation or emotional factors or of environmental disadvantage are not learning disabilities.
- The term learning disability does not exclude the possibility that a learning disabled person may also exhibit such conditions as brain damage or minimal brain dysfunction.
- A person shall be assigned to a program for the learning disabled when the evaluation and the Individualized Education Program indicate that such a program is appropriate, provided that the person can demonstrate average or above average intellectual functioning on an appropriate intelligence measure.

Pertinent parts of the definitions for Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR), and for Socially and Emotionally Disturbed (SED) students are given below.

- An educable mentally retarded person will have an IQ lower than 80 to, and including, 55. Further, the degree of retardation and the level of social and academic functioning shall be the factors in determining the individualized program, not deviant behavior patterns.
- A Socially and Emotionally Disturbed person will have one or more of the characteristics exhibited to a marked degree over a long period of time: an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms, pains or fears associated with personal or school problems (the evaluation must include a report from a board-certified or approved psychiatrist).

A Child Study Evaluation Team (CSET) meets at each public school to review students referred to Special Education.

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* Definitions are from the Pennsylvania State Regulations

Parents of students attending the non-public schools might seek the service of community agencies to review their children and recommend them to the School District as needing Special Education services. The School District reviews these recommendations.

The CSET must provide considerable evidence to determine in which special education category the student should be included, if any, and recommend a primary assignment for the student. The "Least Restrictive Environment" options for those found to be mildly handicapped are as follows:

(1) Resource Room. Resource rooms shall be designed for students who are generally expected to spend 50 per cent or less of their time with the special education teacher, whether in individual or in small group instruction. Instruction shall emphasize development of special skills in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Program rather than subject content. For the remainder of their time, students are assigned to regular education programs or to other types of special education programs.

(2) Part-time Special Class. Part-time special classes shall be designed for students who are generally expected to spend 50 to 85 percent of their time with the special education teacher. Instruction shall emphasize both subject content and development of special skills in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Program. Up to 10 per cent of the student time shall be spent in related activities as described under subsection (a) of this section. For the remaining time, students are released to participate in individual work experience, work training or vocational education programs, while their special education teacher is assigned to instruct a second group of students or to perform other responsibilities.

(3) Full-time Special Class. Full-time special classes shall be designed for students who are generally expected to spend 85 percent or more of their time with the special education teacher. Instruction shall emphasize both subject content and development of special skills in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Program. The remaining student time shall be spent in related activities, such as art, music, physical education, industrial arts and home economics, with emphasis on the concept of mainstreaming on an individual or group assignment basis.

General Questions to be Answered by the Study

The directive for the study was given to the Special Education Research and Evaluation Unit which is a part of the Division of Priority Operations Evaluation Services of the Office of Planning Research and Evaluation.

In response, the Special Education Research and Evaluation Unit (SEREU) developed a general proposal to answer the following demographic questions:

1. What is the rate of growth of the LD population over the last 5 years?
2. What proportions of students classified as LD fall into each year of age, 5 through 21?
3. What proportions of LD students are currently placed in full time, part time, and resource room assignments?
4. What are the racial and sexual proportions of the LD population?
5. What length of time do LD students tend to remain in the program?

It also proposed to answer selected definition issues, which were stated as follows:

6. What criteria do the CSET members use now in determining a student to be LD?
7. In what ways do LD students differ from regular education students (behaviorally, cognitively, and academically)?
8. What proportion of the current LD students would be affected by the use of a given discrepancy between their IQ score and their California Achievement Test scores?

The study would also address information about primary assignments and the criteria utilized:

9. On what basis do CSET members place students or reassign students to

full time, part time, and resource rooms?

10. During the last five years, what proportion of LD students in full time assignments were reassigned to resource rooms or regular education classes?

11. In what ways do students who remain in full time LD classes differ from those who were assigned to part time or resource rooms or regular education classes?

12. What rostering and/or in-school placement policies or procedures facilitate and/or interfere with "weaning" LD students into regular education courses?

Finally, to determine perceptions of the program, two questions were raised:

13. How effective are LD programs in the eyes of the parents? (Their opions were solicited through a mail-in survey and a telephone survey.)

14. What do LD teachers do to help LD students make progress?

Most of the questions raised here were successfully answered by the study, and the data were presented in the findings. Other questions which arose and could be answered in the course of conducting the study were also addressed.

General Procedures for Conduct of the Study

The following provides a brief and general overview of the sources of data and the procedures for gathering them.

1. Results of two previous unpublished School District studies were utilized to address issues regarding the distinctions between LD students and regular

education students and among LD students in different primary assignments. One study focused on the Initial Screening Checklist (ISC). It provided a way to examine pupil behavior systematically. It had 45 items (statements of behavior which teachers would rate on a scale of one to five for each student in a sub-sample of LD students It also was used to explore some characteristics of LD students that might differ from those of regular education students. The second study focused on the statistical relationship between a cross section of Philadelphia public school students (not excluding LD students) who had taken the California Achievement Tests and were administered the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children, Revised (WISC-R). The procedures utilized in the study were based on a statistical treatment for arriving at a value of discrepancy between a measured IQ score and low achievement. Utilization of such information has been considered by the Division of Special Education, but adoption of the guideline data has not been determined.

2. The School District has three computerized files which were addressed for demographic and achievement data. One file is managed by the Division of Special Education and contains basic information on all of the students for which it has responsibility. It is referred to as the Student Tracking System. A second file is managed by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, called the Pupil Directory Information File (PDIF). It contains basic demographic and location information for all students served by the School District of Philadelphia, and identifies Special Education students who are in full time classroom assignments. One version of the PDIF contains basic location information for the entire time the student is in the school system, as well as "drop code" information. The third file is the City Wide Testing file (CWT) which contains current year achievement test data. One version of the file links CWT data since 1980 for each participating student.

Mildly handicapped students are included in the testing program unless specifically excluded at the direction of the school principal.

3. Individual special education student files are kept at the school.

. Special education files contain confidential information; that which was of use to the study included WISC-R data, Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) data, assignment recommendations, an overview of characteristics of the student presented by the CSET, and recommendation for Special Education (an SEH-75 form).

4. Two professional groups were selected for interviews regarding criteria for identification and assignment of LD students. One-half of the psychologists and one-third of the instructional advisors (IAs) were selected randomly. Thus, 42 members of each group were selected. The two groups represent two different aspects of the CSETs. The psychologists would (generally speaking) determine students' cognitive potential, functioning ability, and social adaptability. IAs would (generally speaking) develop educational data about the students' performance, learning patterns, and classroom behavior for the various schools in each district.

5. The randomly selected sample of students about whom specific special education data were gathered also defined the sample of parents. Three quarters of the parents were sent a questionnaire through the mail to solicit their opinions about the LD program. The other quarter were interviewed over the telephone, using essentially the same questions.

6. One quarter of the students in the sample selected were randomly identified for three additional areas of information. Their teachers were interviewed to learn what the students' "problems" were, to learn what the teachers did to help them make progress, and to learn whether the teachers thought the students could "survive" in regular classroom settings. The teachers of this one-quarter sample were also asked to rate the students' behavior on the Initial Screening Checklist (ISC), and the counselors were asked to administer a scale (The

Individual Achievement Responsibility Scale) to the student to measure the extent to which the students "felt responsible" for their learning. Published studies of the latter instrument had indicated that Learning Disabled students tended (as a group) to assume less responsibility for achievement than did regular education students (as a group).

FINDINGS

The findings from the study are presented under five major headings. These include demographic, selection and assignments, teachers' views, two concurrent studies and the parents' views.

Demographic Findings

The demographic data developed for the study were drawn primarily from the existing computerized files pertinent to all students identified in the category of Learning Disabled. However, as part of the presentation of these data, references are made to some of the demographic characteristics of the general school population. In other places, comparisons are made to the sample of students selected at random so that the reader may decide the degree to which the sample was representative of the population. For some of the characteristics presented, the data were available only from the selected sample.

1. Five Year Comparisons of Three Mildly Handicapped Populations

   Five years of population data were obtained from the Pupil Directory Information File (PDIF) to estimate the populations of EMR, SED, and LD students. Since the PDIF contained identification of only those students who were full time special education students, these numbers do not identify the total population figures. However, examination of Figure 1 does reveal in general that the EMR full time population has declined slightly over the last five years until this current year (1983-1984, or simply labeled as 1984). The full time SED population has varied slightly from year to year, and the LD full time population has steadily increased.

2. Proportion of Population by Age

   Figures 2, 3, and 4 present part of the evidence that the populations of full time EMR, SED, and LD have maintained the same general shape during the five years. To have shown all five years would have been a

5 YEAR POPULATION OF FULL TIME STUDENTS*

THREE MILDLY HANDICAPPED SPECIAL EDUCATION CATEGORIES

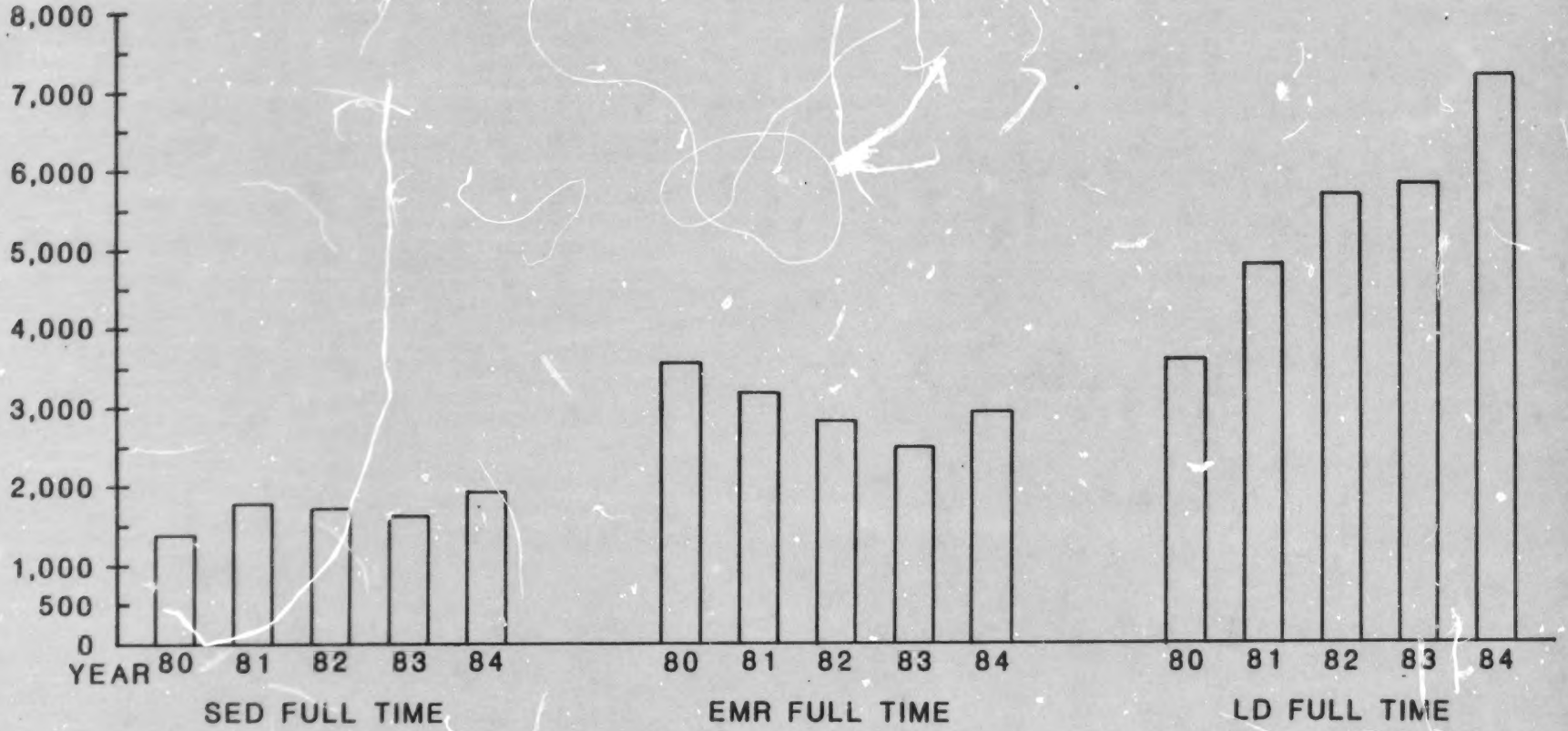

FIGURE 1

*SOURCE: PDIF SYSTEM

EMR FULL TIME CLASS PLACEMENT 1980, 1982

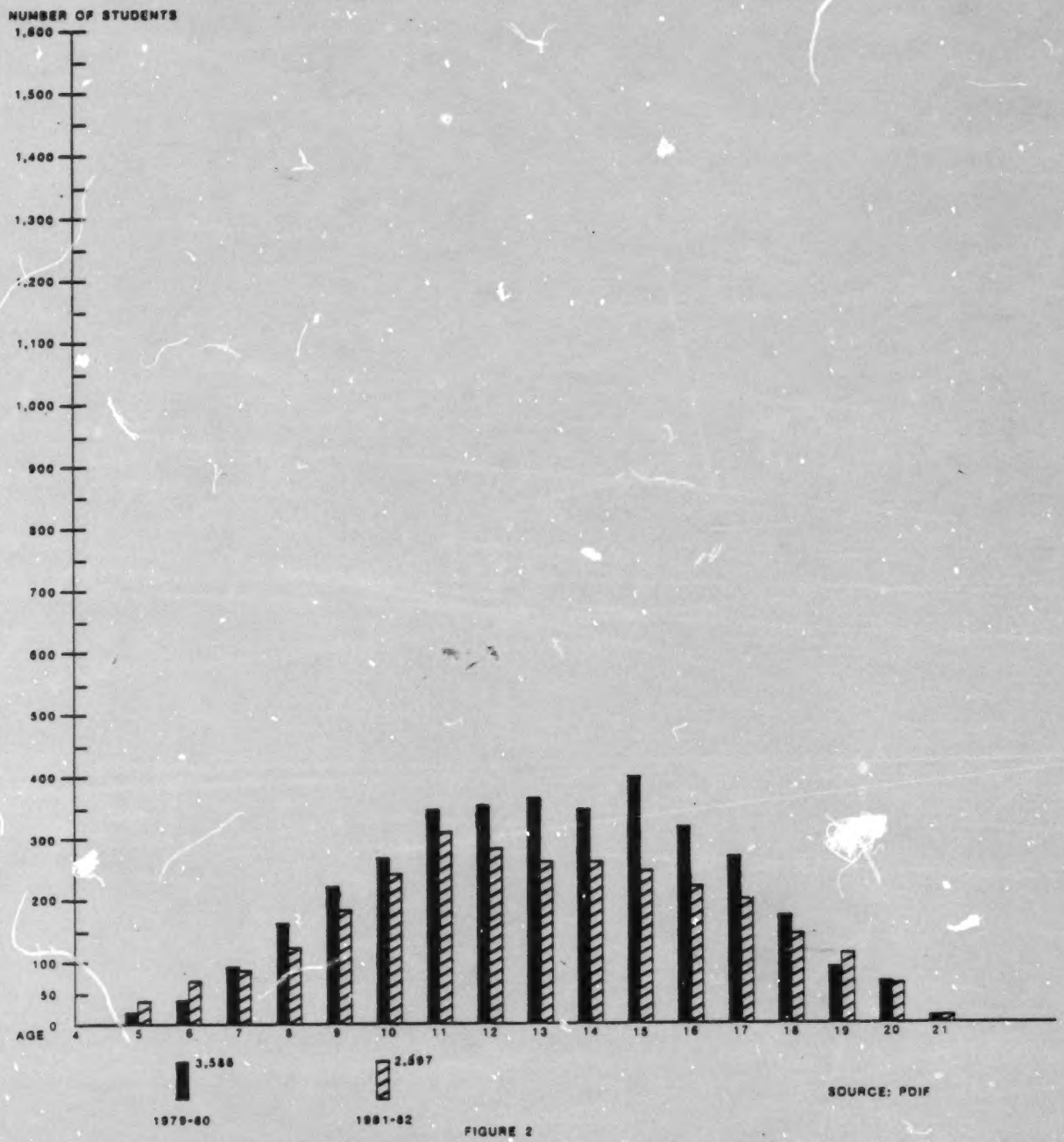

FIGURE 2

SED FULL TIME CLASS PLACEMENT 1980, 1982

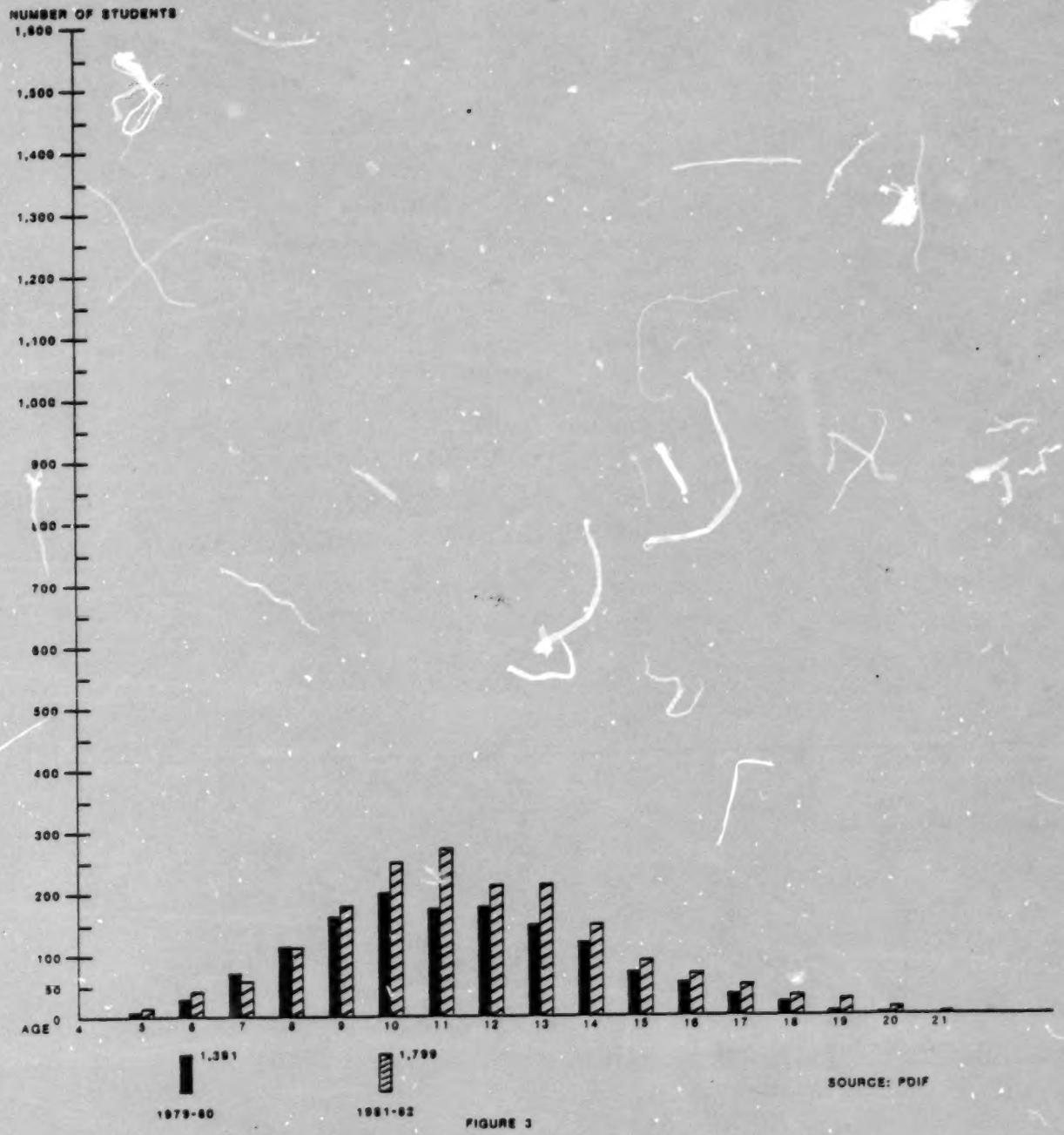

FIGURE 3

LD FULL TIME CLASS PLACEMENT 1980, 1982

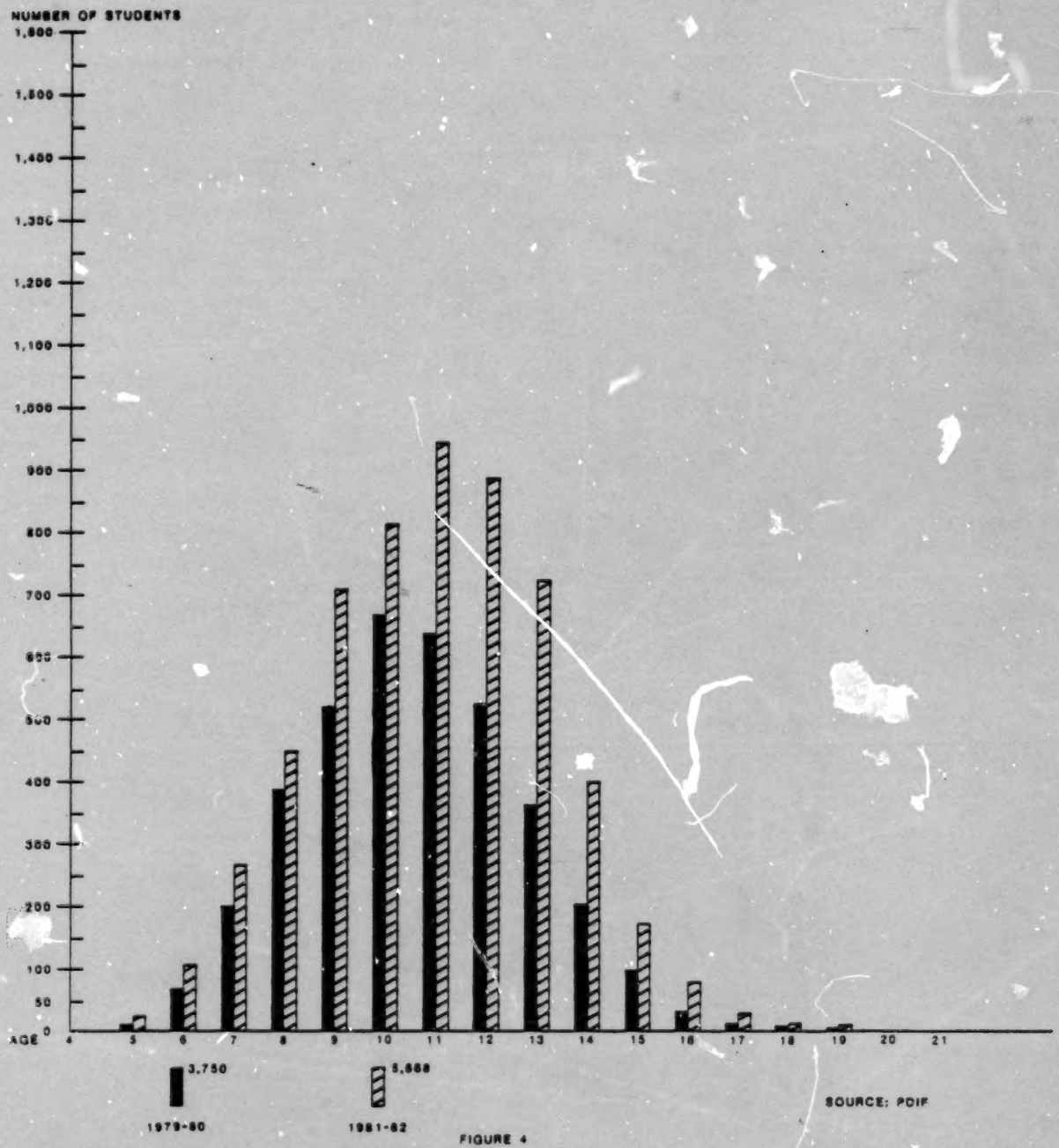

FIGURE 4

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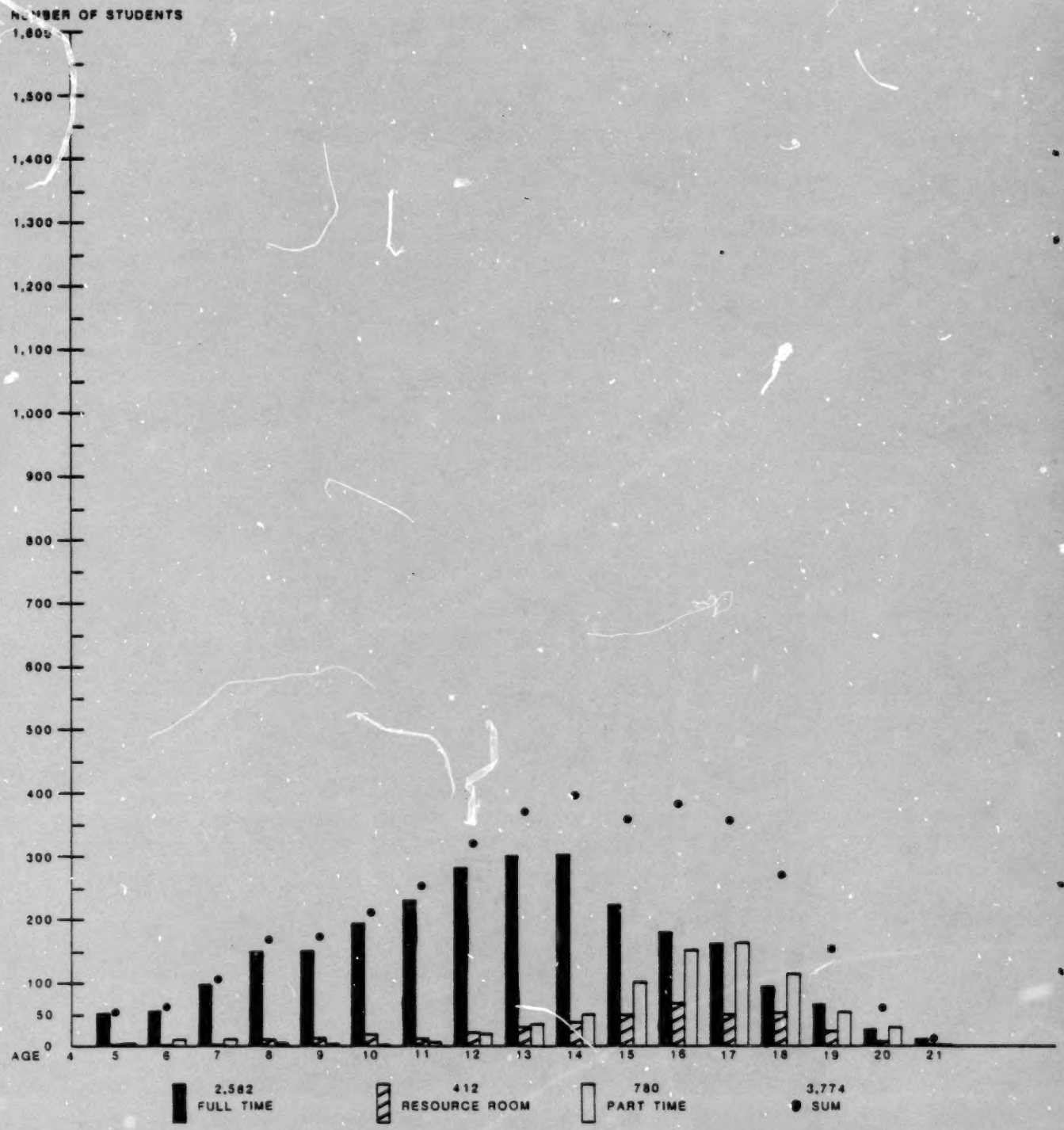
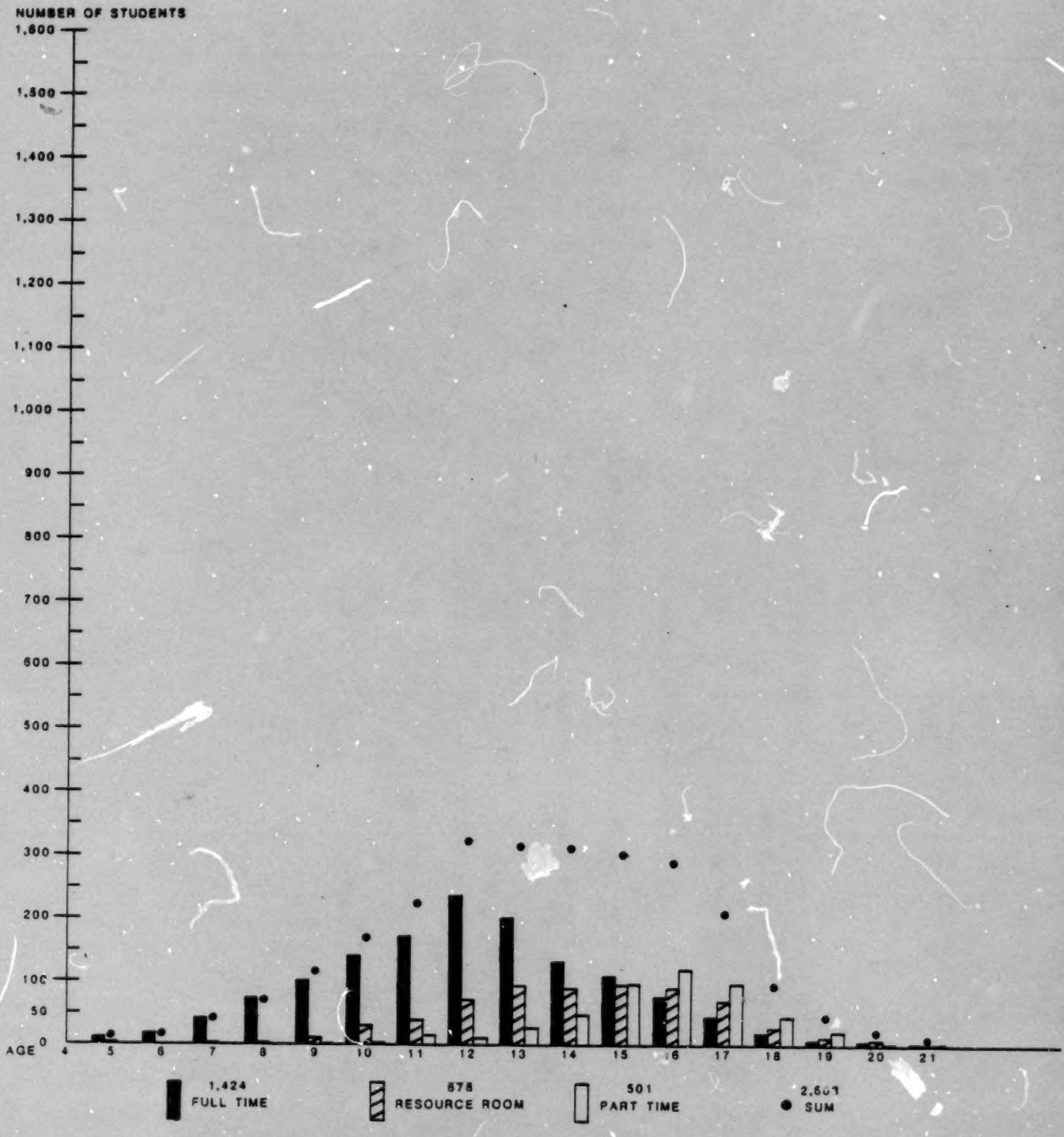
EMR ALL PLACEMENTS 1983-1984



SOURCE: STUDENT TRACKING

FIGURE 5

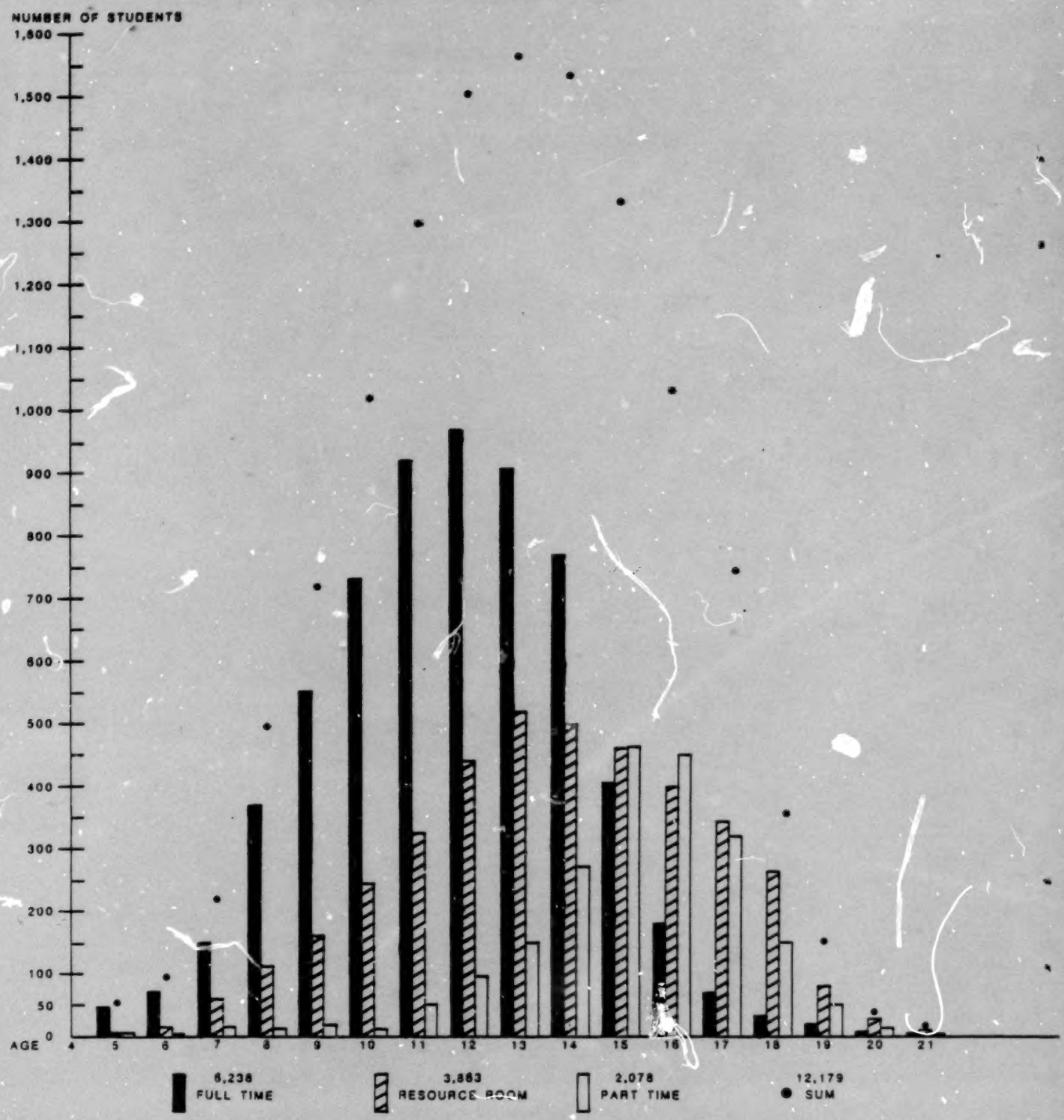
SED ALL PLACEMENTS 1983-1984



SOURCE: STUDENT TRACKING

FIGURE 6

LD ALL PLACEMENTS 1983-1984



SOURCE: STUDENT TRACKING

FIGURE 7

fairly complicated graph, so two years representing 1980 and 1982 were shown. While the peaks of the graphs (the largest number of students at an age) have shifted slightly to the right (to older students) the general shapes of the graphs have remained. The LD graph shows the increase in numbers of students. Data were from PDIF. (These graphs were drawn to the same scale as that in Figures 5, 6, and 7, discussed below, permitting a comparison of the full time populations.)

3. All Current Assignments by Age

Figures 5, 6, and 7 permit one to examine the distribution of the numbers of students at each age (as of February, 1984) in each of the three identified primary assignments. Data are from the Student Tracking System. According to these data, the EMR population was enrolled primarily in full time assignments. (Administrators in special education indicated that proportionally more EMR students were in part time assignments than the data showed. They think there is a tendency for reporting persons to "assume" if a student is EMR, then the student attends a full time class, and thus the number of students in that assignment are over represented.)

The SED figure showed that there tended to be two assignments for the population. The younger students were primarily assigned to full time classes while the older students were primarily assigned to resource rooms. Thus, older students would tend to take regular education courses and receive resource room support.

The LD population tended to have three distinct assignments. Younger students tended to be in full time classes. The number in resource rooms showed higher utilization of that assignment around the junior high years, and by high school, students were either in part time or resource room assignments, with fewer and fewer in full time assignments.

4. Current Enrollments in LD

The number of students enrolled (data provided especially for the study by the Division of Special Education in May, 1984) provided a count for each administrative subdistrict by primary assignment (see Table 1). In each district, the preponderance of all LD students is

TABLE 1

COUNT OF LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS BY DISTRICT/TOTAL

MAY 1984*

Primary Assignment	District							Total City
	1	2	4	5	6	7	8	
Resource Room	530	420	367	441	674	658	327	3417
Part Time	214	115	89	145	371	236	324	1494
Full Time	795	919	756	902	593	1341	1056	6362
Other	6	2	1	20	36	6	2	73
Total	1545	1456	1213	1508	1674	2241	1709	11346

* Source: Student Tracking System, Division of Special Education

in full time assignments. Part time assignments in District 4 seemed quite low, relatively, and in District 8, the number in resource rooms seemed quite low, relatively. "Other" assignments were likely "miscoded" and must go through a correction process.

A further comparison utilizing these data was made in Table 2. Here, the percentages of the students reported in the population were compared to the percentages reported back from data collectors in the field. (The data collectors were the entire staff of the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation.) Table 2 should be examined in two distinct

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE COMPARISON OF LD POPULATION
TO "RETURNED" LD SAMPLE* 1984

Primary Assignment	Districts														All Districts	
	1**		2		4		5		6		7		8			
	P %	S %	P %	S %	P %	S %	P %	S %	P %	S %	P %	S %	P %	S %	P %	S %
Resource Room	34	39	29	22	30	34	30	21	41	39	29	30	19	18	30	29
Part Time	14	13	8	16	7	8	10	12	23	21	11	20	19	20	13	16
Full Time	52	48	63	62	62	58	61	67	36	40	60	50	62	62	56	55
District as Proportion of City	14	13	13	10	11	11	13	14	15	13	20	22	15	16	100	100

* From returns of current assignment. Resource Room, Part time, and Full Time assignments are given as the percentages within each district. Total Districts are given across as percentages of all districts combined.

** Each district is separated into (P) "population" and (S) "sample" percentages.

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steps. The first is to consider the three primary assignments for each district and total city (far right columns). The letters "P" and "S" stand for the percentage of the LD population (P) and the percentage of the LD sample (s). The sum of three percentages in a column (such as 37, 15, and 55 under "P" for District 1) sum to 100%, or all of the students in those three assignments for the district. Within each district, the population and sample percentages may be compared. The current assignments for the sample of students matched within 10% points the distribution of assignments of the district populations of LD students, and for the city, they were within 3% points.
The second step is to compare the "Total District" display across the bottom of Table 1. Here, the percentages for each district (population and sample) were calculated as a proportion of the total city. Thus, the sum of the districts' percentages is equal to 100%. The sample was within 2% points of the district population of LD students, and thus appears adequate to represent the LD population.

Finally, regarding enrollment data, Table 3 displays the percentage of LD students compared to the public school enrollment. Districts varied from 4.0% to 7.3%, with an average of 5.6%. When the percentage was recalculated for the combined public and parochial school populations, the LD population was found to be 4.0% (Public School total=202,240 and Parochial School total=80,662). Since the LD population draws from both systems, the percentage of both systems which is LD is a more representative figure.

TABLE 3

PERCENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL POPULATION IN LD PROGRAMS
1983-1984

District	Public School Population	LD Population	Percent LD
1	30232	1545	5.1
2	26987	1456	5.4
4	29976	1213	4.0
5	30418	1508	5.0
6	28207	1674	5.9
7	30907	2241	7.3
8	25513	1709	6.7
Total	202240	11346	5.6

5. Distribution of Learning Disabled Students by Race

The distribution of LD students by race for the sample chosen is compared to the city enrollment and the full time LD enrollment in Table 4. The sample population represented a proportion of LD students at all grades from all districts in full time, resource room, and part time assignments. While roughly the same as the full time distribution and the citywide enrollment distribution, there were some differences which appeared and were consistent in direction district by district (not shown). That is, the Hispanic population was nearly equal in all three cases, while there was a larger percentage of White students and a smaller percentage of Black students in LD programs than in the citywide enrollment.

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF ALL PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS, LD STUDENTS AND LD SAMPLE BY RACE
1983-1984

Race	City Enrollment* Number	%	Sample Population+ Number	%	LD Population++ Number	%
Black	132,164	65	434	50	6309	60
White	52,913	26	355	41	3414	32
Hispanic	17,255	9	76	9	821	8
Combined	202,332	100**	865	100	10544	100

* Data taken from Pupil Directory Information File

** Enrollment data displays only 3 racial groups and the percentages are based on that.

\+ Original Sample drawn.

++ Data from Student Tracking System, May 1984

Since the LD population was drawn from parochial and public school students, and the parochial schools had a different distribution of racial groups than did public schools, the combination of school students might show a greater resemblance to the LD population. Elementary pupil data from the Office of Catholic Education showed that their student body was 77% White, 19% Black, and 4% Hispanic. By extrapolation to the total parochial population, the combined student bodies of both systems contained 52% Black, 41% White, and 7% Hispanic. These percentages compared favorably with the Sample figures. However, a higher percentage of Black students and a lower percentage of White students were LD than the combined population would predict.

The comparison of the sample to the LD population was a second issue. The sample varied by 10 percentage points from the LD population for Black students, and by 9 percentage points for White students. The Hispanic proportions were only 1 percentage point different. Thus, although less consistent than desired, the sample is fairly representative of the LD population.

An examination of the primary assignments of the LD population with respect to race showed another difference. The proportion of the Hispanic population was 72% in full time assignments to 20% in resource rooms. For White LD students it was 62% to 24%, and for Black LD students it was 51% to 35%. Whether these are indicative of differential degrees of need or reflective of other factors was not discovered.

6. Distribution of Learning Disabled Students by Sex

The distribution of the LD sample population, (see Table 5) when divided into boys and girls, revealed that in each district there was a preponderance of boys. The percentages ranged from a low of 64% boys to a high of 75% boys. The average was 70% boys. (There is some discussion on the literature to indicate that disabilities and maladjustments tend to be more predominant among boys in that they are psychologically and biologically more "at risk.")

TABLE 5

SEX DISTRIBUTION OF LD SAMPLE AND POPULATION
1983-1984

	LD Population				LD Sample			
	Girls		Boys		Girls		Boys	
District	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	472	28%	1186	72%	27	25%	81	75%
2	466	28%	1221	72%	31	36%	56	64%
4	320	25%	947	75%	31	30%	73	70%
5	476	29%	1159	71%	40	31%	90	69%
6	490	27%	1322	73%	36	30%	83	70%
7	713	28%	1831	72%	50	27%	132	73%
8	577	33%	1174	67%	45	33%	90	67%
Total	3514	28%	8840	72%	260	30	605	70%

LD Population from Special Education Student Tracking, corrected May, 1984

LD Sample from Special Education Student Tracking, April, 1984

7. Intelligence Measures on Learning Disabled Students

The intelligence measures were obtainable only from confidential student files. Therefore, the data here were based on the sample of LD students. There were four standard IQ tests which were found: the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R), the Binet, the Weschler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI), and the EIWN (a Spanish version of the WISC-R). The WISC-R is the IQ test most often used, but evidence of the other three were found. Except for the Binet, the tests yield three IQ measures. The first is the "Verbal IQ," the second is the "Performance IQ," and the third is the "Full Scale" score.

TABLE 6

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF IQ SCORES FOR STUDENTS ORIGINALLY PLACED IN LD (BY DISTRICT) 1983-1984

District/N+	Verbal IQ Ave.	Verbal IQ S.D.	Performance IQ Ave.	Performance IQ S.D.	Full Scale IQ Ave.	Full Scale IQ S.D.
1 (90)	84	10.5	85	9.5	83	8.7
2 (85)	84	10.6	86	11.0	84	8.9
4 (88)	83	10.5	83	10.3	82	8.6
5 (108)	83	14.3	87	14.8	84	10.2
6 (101)	87	10.9	88	12.1	87	10.5
7 (152)	88	12.3	88	13.4	87	12.8
8 (120)	92	11.2	89	14.5	93	32.4
City (754)	86	11.7	87	12.6	86	16.0

+Numbers of students reported are for Full Scale Scores available, and the numbers for Verbal and Performance scores are fewer by 2 to 17 students; on the average about 9 students fewer per district.

In Table 6, the average IQ score for the LD students (in the sample, with data returned) is shown with the standard deviation. (The standard deviation is given to indicate the spread of the scores. Two-thirds of the scores of the group will fall between the average score minus the standard deviation and the average score plus the standard deviation. Thus, if the average score was 85 and the standard deviation was 10, roughly two thirds of the scores would fall between 75 and 95.) The number of students in Table 6 represent the number for whom a "Full Scale" score was available. Only two to seventeen students per district did not have the other two scores.

Because of the references to intelligence assessments that are applicable to LD students (of normal intelligence or higher) and EMR students (55 up to 80 IQ), it was important to examine the IQ data in one additional way. For the sample of students whose IQ measures were reported, the number and percentage of students whose Full Scale IQ scores were less than 80 were determined (see Table 7).

TABLE 7

ANALYSIS OF FULL SCALE IQ SCORES BY DISTRICT
1983-1984

District	Cases Used*	Full Scale IQ Less Than 80					Full Scale IQ 80 or more
		Total	But 80 Or More For: Verbal	Performance	Neither		
	N	N	N	N	N	%	
1	90	23	5	9	9	10%	67
2	85	22	5	11	6	7%	63
4	88	32	11	14	7	8%	56
5	108	28	8	11	9	8%	80
6	101	19	6	8	5	5%	82
7	162	33	8	15	10	6%	129
8	120	12	6	4	2	2%	108
City	754	169	49	72	48	6%	585

*Cases were those for which three IQ scores were available (Verbal, Performance, and Full Scale) and district was known.

In the far right column of Table 7, the number of students whose Full Scale IQ scores were 80 or above are presented. Of the 754 cases used in the analysis, 585 (77.6%) of the LD students had reported scores equal to or greater than 80. In the middle of Table 7 is an accounting of all students whose Full Scale IQ scores were less than 80. Forty-nine of the students had a Verbal IQ eighty or above, and 72 had a Performance IQ 80 or above. Thus, 121 students (16%) had one or the other IQ scores 80 or above. This left 48 students (6% of the LD sample) with no IQ measure reported to be 80 or above.

Because we had tried to collect the earliest and most recent IQ measures on each of the sample cases, an analysis of change in IQ could be made. The resulting findings are summarized in the next few paragraphs. The reader is reminded that "earliest" IQ and "current" IQ scores specifies no particular period of time, which ranged from two to eight years depending on the case.

For those students whose records contained either Verbal, Performance, and/or Full Scale IQ scores, an analysis of change was made between earliest and most recent scores.

Verbal IQ scores changed upwards by as much as 27 points to downward by as much as 25 points. The average change was upward by 2.0 points, and the standard deviation was 9 points. That is, two thirds of all changes ranged from -7 to +11. (N=318)

Performance IQ scores changed upwards by as much as 19 points to downward by as much as 29 points. The average change was downward -3.3 points. The standard deviation was 9 points; two-thirds of all students' Performance IQ changes were from -12 to +6. (N=315)

Full Scale IQ scores changed upwards by as much as 18 points and downward by as much as 29 points. The average change was downward 1.0 points. The standard deviation was 8 points, meaning that two thirds of all changes ranged from -9 to =7. (N=352)

An examination of changes in IQ scores for LD students whose Full Scale IQ was less than 80 showed greater negative change. The average Verbal score dropped by -1.5, the average Performance score dropped by -5, and the average Full Scale score dropped by -4.9. (N=102, 99, 114). Standard deviations continued to be 9 points.

These data indicate that (except for Verbal scores) the IQ of the average student in LD class (full time, part time, and resource room combined) tends to decline. For the students with lower IQ scores, the amount of decline is even greater. The downward trend, while small, indicates that an increase in IQ after some period of time in the program did not occur.

8. California Achievement Test Data

(Data were unavailable at the time of the writing, but will be added later.)

9. Attendance Data

In Table 8, the median and range of days of absence are shown. The table breaks the data into three age groups of students to show separately the elementary, middle, and high school figures. These data were collected on 559 of the students from school records. In some cases the data were not available. They represent the 1982-1983 school year, and some students were not in public school that year. In other cases (only a few) the records were still in transition or had not been updated.

TABLE 8

LEARNING DISABILITIES SAMPLE
1982-1983 ABSENCE DATA

		Days of Absence		
Age Level	N	Low	High	Median
Under 12 years	244	1	114	15
15 to 12 years	238	1	162	22
16 or older	77	2	170	28

As shown, the median absences increase with the age group, as do the "high" number of absences.

Full population absence data were not available in a form which would permit comparison.

Selection Practices and Characteristics of Learning Disabled Students

1. Overview

This section presents the findings from a number of different sources and analyses of data. The general flow was to start at the beginning of a process of recommending a student to be reviewed by the Child Study Evaluation Team, to examine what psychologists and instructional advisors (IAs) explained during interveiws about those evaluation processes. Then an analysis of descriptions of LD students was made, based on the CSET writings. We also examined, in two different ways, how discrepancies between potential (ability) of students and their actual performance might be estimated. We then turned to what teachers told us in interviews about the students' "problems" and what they did to help the students make progress. We looked at a few teachers' perceptions of students who were no longer LD (that is, no longer in a special education program for LD students). We then examined another measure of LD characteristics as rated by teachers, and a measure of the responsibility for achievement as reported by the LD students. Finally, we summarized our findings from the survey and telephone interviews with parents.

When a student is referred to the Division of Special Education to be reviewed by a Child Study Evaluation Team, there is a form completed by teachers, students, parents, or others. This form is called the "Referral to Child Study Evaluation Team," but is often referred to as the "SEH-75." This form becomes part of the confidential file, should the student be found to be exceptional. Prior to this step, however, the school people may review the student's educational needs and learning problems. Adjustments to instruction may be recommended, and alternative assignments to certain programs may be made, if the student qualifies and the programs exist in those schools. Should the principal decide that there are no alternatives, or the alternatives have been tried but did not help, then the CSET is convened to consider the case.

At this meeting, a decision is made about what data should be gathered.

The staff of the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation were asked to record the description of students' problems as written on the SEH-75. A set of examples from each district will be found in Appendix A of this report, for a better picture of the attributes of referred students.

Some referrals made references to the students' achievement.

"Working far below other students in class."

Some referrals made reference to the students' behavior.

"Daydreams and lacks concentration, can't follow directions."

Some referrals made reference to social behavior.

"He is timid, shy, and appears frightened in class. Very immature."

Some referrals were combinations of all these kinds of things.

"Not responsive to first grade work. Confuses letters with numbers. Poor recall of academic work. Problems with 'common sense' type math problems, short attention span and doesn't seek help."

In attempting to explain the apparent differences in racial distribution between the LD population and the public school system, it was decided to go back to the data collection forms, and see what portion of the referrals or CSET reports had come from outside the school district. The office staff, although not requested to note this information, often had done so as they noticed it. Further, often the people who interviewed parents had commented on the frequency with which this had been mentioned. Hence, Table 9 summarizes a count of the frequency with which these data "happened to be noticed."

In three of the districts, the proportion of students being referred from "outside" the school district were, at a minimum, 9% to 14% (Districts 8, 1, and 7). The other districts showed lower "outside" referral rates, but it is not known what the real rates were. That is, the rates of "outside referral" may be higher than reported, or the same, but not lower.

TABLE 9

PERCENTAGE OUTSIDE REFERRALS TO SPECIAL EDUCATION BASED ON SAMPLE

District	LD Sample	"Outside Referrals"	
	N	N	%
1	96	10	10%
2	82	-	-
4	88	2	2%
5	108	7	6%
6	99	2	2%
7	167	23	14%
8	119	11	9%
Total	759	55	7%

2. Summary of Psychologists' and Instructional Advisors' Interviews

Designated Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation staff interviewed 41 psychologists and 42 IAs. The results for each group were summarized separately, both of which will be found in Appendices B and C. The following is a combined summary and comparison of findings.

A. The roles of psychologists and IA's were observed to be different.

(1) Psychologists' battery of tests and procedures tended to include the WISC-R I.Q. test (or the Binet or Spanish version of the WISC-R), individualized achievement tests (WRAT and Bender Visual Motor Gestalt test), other tests as needed.

(2) IA's battery of tests and procedures tended to include discussion with the teacher, a survey and diagnostic tests of reading, mathematics, and comprehension skills (Key Math, Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, IRI's, Silvarolli, Daniels Word List, etc.).

B. An area of concern voiced by psychologists was the use of an I.Q. score to define a student's "potential" when emotional, neurological, or cognitive problems might "depress" the real score, as when:

(1) Undefined large discrepancies were evident between verbal and performance scores.

(2) Scores in the "normal range" were measured for vocabulary, similarities, and/or comprehension subtests of the I.Q. test, but other areas were low.

(3) Students functioned significantly higher (undefined) in one academic area than in the others.

(4) Emotional or social problems were evidenced during the testing (e.g., severe withdrawal or anxiety).

(5) Possible evidence of neurological problems were evidenced during testing (e.g., not hearing questions correctly, confusing words, not being able to find the word to use).

(6) Environmental factors which might interfere with responses (stress in the family, long illness, etc.).

Thus, while expert opinion supports not trusting the measured I.Q. when these factors are present, the resulting estimate of "normal intelligence" leaves one with an unknown quantity.

C. Psychologists tended to look for indications of neurological or cognitive dysfunctioning which would not necessarily show on medical tests.

D. Both groups tended to describe "slow learners" as students with "flat test score profiles" which to them indicated that students were achieving commensurate with their abilities.

E. Some differences in opinion occurred in that some thought LD students tended not to be behavior problems, but others pointed out that behavior problems were indicative of learning disabilities. "Behavior problems" were not clearly defined.

F. Both IA's and psychologists indicated that referral information alone was seldom specific enough to provide clues into the nature of children's problems.

G. "Environmental Factors" used to exclude students from being classified as LD were not uniform.

(1) Most IA's who answered the question said they did not consider environmental factors.

(2) Most psychologists who answered the question said they did take environmental factors into consideration.

Thus, there appears to be a need to define "environmental factors" which should be considered, and how they should be considered.

H. Both IA's and psychologists tended to look for perceptual-motor or other neurological dysfunctions, and to look for evidence of a discrepancy between "potential" and "actual" achievement.

I. Differences in approach to defining a discrepancy between "potential" and "actual" achievement were evident.

1. Psychologists tended to indicate they sought the discrepancy between achievement and potential.
2. IA's tended to indicate they sought the discrepancy between achievement and the child's grade placement.
3. Some considered the child's age and peers when weighing the discrepancy.

J. Slightly more than half of both groups said they had or would recommend students to LD programs if it were the only way to get help for them, due to

K. the lack of regular education options.

When reteaming LD students, both groups said there was no problem in placing students in resource rooms or part time classes, but the reverse (having full time classes available) was more often the problem.

3. Identification Characteristics

The research staff examined CSET (Child Study Evaluation Team) reports and summarized (in a brief sentence) the characteristics which seemed to have led the CSET members to identify a student as Learning Disabled. To sort the summary statements, the following categories were developed.

1. Academic: those summaries which referred to students' academic problems in general or specifically (e.g., four years behind in math, or very slow academic progress).
2. Functioning: those summaries which referred to students' perceptual, memory, cognitive or behavior problems. The behavior problems, however, were selected if they seemed to evidence some functioning problem. For example, "forgets what he learns" or "hyperactive" as opposed to "lazy" or "disruptive."
3. Social/Emotional: those summaries which referred to students' behaviors which seemed to evidence poor social adjustment ("a follower") or emotional adjustment ("immature").

4. Medical: those summaries which referred to students' documented medical problems ("long illness," or specific medical problems).

Upon sorting the data, it was found that eight groups could be used in which to tally the apparent reasons students were found to be LD. These were:

1. Functioning (only)
2. Academic (only)
3. Social/Emotional (only)
4. Medical (only)
5. Functioning and Social/Emotional
6. Functioning and Academic
7. Social/Emotional and Academic
8. No descriptive statement

These categories (1-7) were listed in Table 10 by subdistrict. The percentages of the data forms which fell into categories 1-7 ranged from 51% to 85%, and on the average across districts represented 73% of the cases.

The table showed that staff reported the evidence of a functioning problem as a major characteristic of an LD student. District 6 and 8 both had 74% of the cases fall into the Functioning category. District 1 had the lowest percentage of descriptions reported in the Functioning Category (49%). The other districts fell in between 49% and 74%. Academic problems ranked second among the reasons for LD assignments as reported by research staff. District 7 had the highest proportion (29%) of students being characterized as LD due to academic problems. The lowest proportion (8%) of students assigned to LD programs due to academic problems was found in District 6. Social/emotional problems accounted for the smallest percentage of the LD assignments as presented by the research staff. These ranged from 4% in District 2 to 20% in District One. Medical reasons accounted for only a few of the LD assignments.

TABLE 10

FREQUENCIES OF MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS
WHICH LED CSET MEMBERS TO FIND STUDENTS LEARNING DISABLED,
REPORTED BY RESEARCH STAFF THROUGH A REVIEW OF CSET RECORDS

CATEGORY	DISTRICT													
	1		2		4		5		6		7		8	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Functioning	40	49%	40	71%	28	67%	41	59%	64	74%	74	59%	65	74%
2. Academic	16	20%	11	20%	6	14%	12	17%	7	8%	37	29%	12	14%
3. Social/Emotional	16	20%	2	4%	6	14%	12	17%	14	16%	8	6%	11	13%
4. Medical	1	1%	1	1%	-	-	1	1%	-	-	1	1%	-	-
5. Functional and Social/Emotional	9	11%	2	4%	-	-	-	-	1	1%	6	5%	-	-
6. Functional and Academic	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	6%	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. Social/Emotional and Academic	-	-	-	-	2	5%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	82	101%	56	100%	42	100%	70	100%	86	99%	126	100%	88	101%

* Some percentages did not total 100% due to rounding.

There was a small percentage of cases in which reasons for being LD fell in two categories. Functioning and Social/Emotional reasons for students being considered LD accounted for 11% in District 1 and 0-4% in all other districts. District 5 was the only district in which LD cases (6%) fell into the Functioning and Academic category. District 4 alone was reported to have had students (5%) assigned to the LD program because of emotional and academic problems.

As reported by research staff in reviewing CSET reports, the major characteristic which made a student learning disabled was some type of functioning problem. The largest occurrences of functioning problems tended to be perceptual and perceptual motor

One of the major points of identification for LD students is that there be a severe discrepancy between their potential and actual achievement. In interviewing CSET members, it was not always clear what they used to assess "potential," nor how much discrepancy need be identified. One general procedure seemed to employ the difference between the grade a student was in and the grade equivalent scores obtained from an achievement test. A second general procedure seemed to estimate the child's potential (evidently based upon intelligence) and decide whether the achievement scores showed a discrepancy lower than the "potential."

The WRAT (Wide Range Achievement Test) is an individual test sometimes administered by the trained psychologists to assess general achievement levels in three areas: Word Recognition, Spelling, and Arithmetic. One of the concerns about the results of the WRAT is that, due to its design, it provides a score which represents the level of achievement at which the student would be <u>frustrated</u> were instruction based on it. In other words, it tends to overestimate the students' achievement level. Since WRAT data were available for most students in the sample, it was decided to explore how achievement data might define discrepancy. Two possible definitions were suggested.

> Definition of discrepancy #1: The student's age at the time of WRAT testing (assumed to be done during the year the student was first reveiwed by the CSET) subtract 5 (the average age children begins first grade) equals the grade the student "should" be in. Predicted grade minus WRAT grade equivalent scores equals discrepancy.
>
> Definition of discrepancy #2: The student's age at the time of WRAT testing (assumed to be done the year the student was first reviewed by the CSET) times (Full Scale IQ divided by 100) subtract 5 equals predicted "mental grade" commensurate with the student's "potential." The "mental grade" minus WRAT equivalent scores equals discrepancy.*

*This is not to suggest that the formula is defensible, but it is used in one form or another in many school districts throughout the nation.

Cases from the sample which provided Full Scale IQ scores and WRAT grade equivalent scores were first separated into four age groups. By doing this, it could be determined whether the size of the average discrepancy for each group increased in amount as the average age increased as indicated by some of the CSET members.

Age Group 1 - students 6 - 8 years old

Age Group 2 - students 9 - 11 years old

Age Group 3 - students 12 - 14 years old

Age Group 4 - students 15 years or older

When Definition #1 was used to define the discrepancy (shown in Table 11) there was a fairly consistent progression of discrepancies becoming larger as the average age of the group increased. For the Age group 2 students, the average discrepancy was two years below for Arithmetic, and greater than two years for Word Recognition and Spelling. Discrepancies for Age group 3 showed them to be four or more years behind, and for Age group 4, six or more years behind. For Age group 1, the discrepancy values were one-third (Spelling).

When discrepancies were calculated using Definition #2, the same type of progression in their size was found (that is, it became larger as the average age of the group increased), but the values of the discrepancies did not match the expected sizes based upon CSET member interviews (see Table 12). First, the discrepancies for Age Group 1 were in the wrong direction (see Table 12, Word Recognition and Arithmetic). Second, for each of the remaining age groups, the amount the students were behind "mental" grade was not as large as expected.

The data appeared to support Definition #1 rather than Definition #2 as the more likely practice of assessing a discrepancy between potential and achievement. That is, it would appear that whether or not a student is found to evidence a "deficiency in the acquisition of basic learning skills" is determined by the difference between the grade the student is in and the

TABLE 11

EXPECTED GRADE VERSUS WRAT GRADE EQUIVALENT SCORES

Word Recognition

Group	N	Discrepancy Mean	Discrepancy S.D.
1	141	0.67	3.61
2	200	2.41	1.25
3	93	4.05	1.57
4	24	5.91	1.82

Spelling

Group	N	Discrepancy Mean	Discrepancy S.D.
1	252	1.43	2.44
2	320	3.53	1.56
3	153	5.97	1.94
4	32	7.71	2.56

Arithmetic

Group	N	Discrepancy Mean	Discrepancy S.D.
1	130	0.36	3.51
2	194	1.95	.95
3	89	4.10	1.11
4	23	6.28	1.00

TABLE 12

POTENTIAL "MENTAL GRADE" VERSUS WRAT GRADE EQUIVALENT SCORES

Word Recognition

Group	N	Discrepancy Mean	Discrepancy S.D.
1	140	-0.41	3.66
2	194	0.99	1.47
3	93	1.96	1.59
4	24	3.18	1.92

* Fewer students appear because the I.Q. variable was required.

Spelling

Group	N	Discrepancy Mean	Discrepancy S.D.
1	243	0.41	2.60
2	305	2.08	1.83
3	143	3.85	2.10
4	30	4.76	2.59

Arithmetic

Group	N	Discrepancy Mean	Discrepancy S.D.
1	129	-0.74	3.52
2	189	0.51	1.20
3	89	2.03	1.09
4	23	3.50	1.46

number of years behind that grade the student is achieving.

The next test of Definition #1 was to determine whether it would apply equally to each subdistrict. The same calculations were performed on each district's cases in the sample, and the size of the discrepancies compared. However, by breaking Age Group 4 into seven parts, there became too few cases to consider in the comparison.

For Word Recognition, Age Group 1, it was found that District 8 LD students were achieving, on the average, nigher than the expected grade level, while in the other districts they were achieving below their grade level. For Age Group 2, District 8 students were achieving two years below, while the remaining districts' students were as much as three years below. For Age Group 3, the LD students in District 8 were 2.8 years below, and in District 5 they were 4.8 years below expected grade.

For Arithmetic, Age Group 1, students were 1.3 years above grade (in District 8) to one year below (in District 2). Age Group 2 students were 1.8 years below (in District 2) to 2.1 years below (in District 8). Age Group 3 students were 3.8 years below (in District 8) to 4.5 years below (in District 2).

The sizes of the discrepancies from district to district were not equal. However, some CSET members had pointed out that they considered how far behind a student was with respect to the students' immediate peers. Hence, while the general data tend to confirm the use of Definition #1, that definition may not be complete.

The next test of Definition #1 was to see if it would confirm the stated practice that students were recommended for assignments to Full Time LD classes or Resource Room classes dependent upon the degree to which they were below grade level. Findings for this analysis were as follows:

For Age Group 1, no statistically significant difference between the size of the discrepancies for Full Time and Resource Room students was found.

For Age Group 2, a significant difference was found between the size of the discrepancies for Full Time and Resource Room students.

For Age Group 3, there was a significant difference between the size of the discrepancies for Full Time and Resource Room students.

For Age Group 4, too few cases were available for the comparison.

Definition #2 was likewise tested in this way, and no significant differences were found for any of the age groups between Full Time and Resource Room Assignments.

In review, the evidence tends to suggest that current practice in identification of LD students involves the examination of the differences between the students' grade levels and achievement levels. As practiced, it probably includes additional consideration of the achievement of class or school peers. At least for two age groups of students (upper Elementary and Junior High school), recommended assignments to Full Time or Resource Room classes are probably based upon the degree to which the students are below grade level.

Summary of Interviews With Special Education Teachers

We selected every fourth student in the sample to identify a subgroup for whom additional data were requested. The subgroup size identified was 216, but we were able to interview 165 teachers (76%). This usually was due to the fact that the student was either not attending school enough or was not in the school listed on the computer file due to a recent transfer. It was not infrequent, however, to find that when older students had been transferred to the school, their papers had arrived, but they had not.

The summary distinguishes only the educational level (i.e., Elementary, Junior/Middle, and High School) at which the responding teacher taught. It did not distinguish other variables, such as primary assignment or district, so that an already limited sample would not be further subdivided.

The responses to the first question in the interview (see below) were expressed in so many ways that it required two complete efforts to categorize them.

Through this procedure, three categories of student problems were developed (defined earlier to categorize CSET descriptions of the characteristics of LD students.) These categories refer to problems which seemed to be described as Academic in nature (the problem is "poor basic skills", for example), Functional in nature (the problem is that "he can't remember what was just said," or "perceptual," for example), or Social/Emotional in nature (the problem is that he is "immature" or has "no motivation," for example).

1. What are (student's name) main problems as you see them?

The accompanying tables address responses which were generally grouped as "Social/Emotional," "Functioning," and "Academic." Within each of these, categories were developed to subsume apparently related responses. The percentage of responses under the three major groups were provided for comparative purposes, but since most identified more than one problem, but not all students had problems in all areas, the percentages do not sum to 100%.

In general, the most prevalent student problems identified by teachers were social/emotional problems and then academic problems. There were few functioning problems except for "Attention deficit," though some "Cognitive-Memory" and "Perceptual Motor" problems were indicated at the Elementary level.

In the area of academic problems, "Reading" was by far the most prevalent one cited. The prevalent social/emotional problems indicated were "Poor attitude/motivation/socialization" and "Poor self concept."

Tables 13, 14, and 15 summarize these data.

TABLE 13

Summary of Academic Problems of LD Students
as Cited By Their Teachers

Problems Identified	Educational Level		
	Elementary (N=91)	Jr./Middle (N=41)	High (N=33)
1. Poor Basic Skills	6 (7%)	1 (2%)	3 (9%)
2. Reading Skills (word attack, reading comprehension, word recognition, oral reading	34 (37%)	18 (44%)	13 (39%)
3. Written Expression	1 (1%)	2 (5%)	C
4. Math (Arithmetic)	14 (5%)	5 (12%)	3 (9%)
5. No problem	2 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (3%)

TABLE 14

Summary of Social/Emotional Problems of LD Students
Identified By Their Teachers

Problems Identified	Educational Level		
	Elementary (N=91)	Jr./Middle (N=41)	High (N=33)
1. Poor attitude, motivation, socialization (arrogant, fresh, aggressive, fights, gets physical poor self-care, slow to be accepted or to make friends, social,emotional)	20 (22%)	14 (34%)	7(21%)
2. Poor self-discipline (self-control, disruptive)	9 (10%)	5 (12%)	6 (18%)
3. Poor self-concept (Immature, insecure shy, fear of failure, withdrawn, gives up easily, overreacts to minor problems, can't accept criticism, low frustration tolerance, wants attention, dependent, wants peer acceptance, a follower)	22 (24%)	6 (15%)	8 (24%)
4. Poor work/study/organization habits	9 (10%)	4 (10%)	2 (6%)
5. Poor attendance, cutting class	8 (9%)	3 (7%)	4 (12%)
6. Difficult home environment, tension, lack of parental support	3 (3%)	2 (5%)	3 (9%)

TABLE 15

Summary of Functioning Problems of LD Students Identified By Their Teachers

Problems Identified	Educational Level		
	Elementary (N=91)	Jr./Middle (N=41)	High (N=33)
1. Perceptual Motor (eye hand, fine motor, handwriting drawing, visual perception, writing backwards	12 (13%)	1 (2%)	2 (6%)
2. Dyslexia/reversals	4 (4%)	0	0
3. Expressive Language	0	2 (5%)	0
4. Speech/Articulation	4 (4%)	1 (2%)	1 (3%)
5. Aphasia (use of language)	2 (2%)	0	0
6. Receptive Language	0	2 (5%)	0
7. Auditory Perception (listening skills, following directions, confusion)	9 (10%)	2 (5%)	1 (3%)
8. Hyperactive (too active, can't sit still,impulsive)	9 (10%)	0	2 (6%)
9. Attention Deficit (short attention, easily distracted daydreaming)	13 (14%)	8 (20%)	7 (21%)
10. Cognitive Memory (retention, recall)	14 (15%)	2 (5%)	2 (6%)
11. Abstract Reasoning (can't get main idea, conceptualization)	7 (8%)	0	0

2. What kind of help does (student's name) require of you to make progress?

The summary below represents only the most widely reported types of help. Others mentioned "behavior modification," "VAKT,"* use of concrete manipulative materials, modifying work, making students aware of consequences of behavior, and outside counseling. Percentages do not add up to 100% because teachers specified more than one form of help for some students.

TABLE 16

Summary of the Kinds of Help Reported By Teachers as Necessary for the LD Students to Progress

Type of Help	Educational Level		
	Elementary N=91)	Jr./Middle (N=41)	High (N=33)
1. Enccuragement/Motivation	19 (21%)	6 (15%)	5 (15%)
2. Individual Attention/Assistance/ instruction	37 (41%)	18 (44%)	13 (39%)
3. Small Group Instruction	11 (12%)	6 (15%)	0
4. Repetition	14 (15%)	4 (10%)	6 (18%)
5. Close Supervision/Keep on Task	12 (13%)	8 (20%)	5 (15%)
6. Highly Structured Environment	9 (1[illegible]%)	0	0
7. Clear Instruction/Step by Step	6 (7%)	3 (7%)	1 (6%)

"Individual Attention/Assistance/Instruction."

At the heart of the major types of help, we found teachers working one on one, providing encouragement, repetition, and providing close supervision.

* Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, Tactile (Multi-sensory teaching)

3. What, if any, modifications have you found necessary to make to the IEP since it was last rewritten?

In most cases no modifications were made to the I.E.P. A number of teachers volunteered the information that the current I.E.P. had recently been rewritten, and for that reason modifications were not necessary.

A substantial minority of the teachers interviewed reported that they had made modifications to the I.E.P.s. In the majority of these cases the changes were an updating of the objectives as students achieved those listed.

TABLE 17

Summary of Whether Teachers Had Modified IEP's Since Last Rewritten

Response	Educational Level		
	Elementary (N=91)	Jr./Middle (N=41)	High (N=33)
NO	45 (49%)	26 (63%)	18 (55%)
Made Change	40 (44%)	13 (32%)	13 (39%)
No Response	6 (7%)	2 (5%)	2 (6%)

4. Do you think that (student's name) would be able to survive in a regular education classroom? If so, what kind of support would be necessary, if any?

In the opinions of their teachers, approximately one quarter of the students now in LD classes could survive in regular education classrooms, but between two thirds and three quarters could not.

TABLE 18

Summary of Teachers' Opinions As to Whether or Not the LD Student Could Survive in a Regular Education Classroom

Response	Educational Level		
	Elementary (N=91	Jr./Middle (N=41)	High (N=33)
Yes	21 (23%)	11 (27%)	9 (27%)
No	70 (77%)	25 (61%)	23 (70%)
No Response	0	5 (12%)	1 (3%)

For those teachers who went on to say what type of support the student might need if placed in regular education classrooms, the types of support were tallied. The summary categories show that most will still need the same kinds of support, perhaps with a change in degree, as they were receiving. Percentages do not add up to 100%, and were based on "Yes" responses to the first part of the question.

TABLE 19

Summary of Support Teachers Felt LD Students Would Need If They Were Placed in Regular Education Classes

Type of Support Needed	Educational Level		
	Elementary (N=21)	Jr./Middle (N=11)	High (N=9)
1. Constant reinforcement, reteaching individual personal attention, individual learning situation, monitoring progress, or tutoring	12 (57%)	3 (27%)	7 (78%)
2. Small group setting	1 (5%)	0	0
3. Part time placement	0	1 (18%)	1 (11%)
4. Resource Room placement	13 (62%)	8 (73%)	5 (56%)
5. Vocational placement	0	0	1 (11%)
6. Counseling	1 (5%)	0	1 (11%)

The most prevalent responses indicated that either the LD student would need constant supervision/attention, or at least resource room support. Hence, yes, they could survive with the same elements offered by resource room placement.

5. Have you tried to work (student's name) into any regular academic classrooms? If so, have you been successful, or have there been difficulties (such as "full classes," "teacher rejection," "roster change difficulties," etc.)?

The proportion of teachers who indicated that they had tried to work students into regular classrooms was exactly the proportion which earlier had indicated that the student in question could survive in a regular education classroom.

TABLE 20

Summary of Teacher Responses Regarding Effort to Work the LD Student into Regular Education Classes

Response	Educational Level		
	Elementary (N=91)	Jr./Middle (N=41)	High (N=33)
No	66 (73%)	21 (51%)	22 (67%)
Yes	21 (23%)	11 (27%)	9 (27%)
Difficulties	Not successful; Work too difficult; Personality conflicts (N=3)	Not successful; Poor attendance; Self-conscious (N=6)	Not successful; Parent opposition Took too much time; Poor students (N=3)
No response	4 (4%)	9 (22%)	2 (6%)

It should also be noted that very few teachers responded that they had difficulty arranging the placement in a regular education class for the students they considered ready. Difficulties cited related largely to pupil related problems rather than organizational or administrative problems.

Summary of Interviews with Teachers for Students no Longer in LD Programs

A different sample of students was selected who, in 1981, were known to be full time LD students. Of these, we eliminated those still on the Student Tracking System, knowing they were still in special education. We then found the proportion still on the PDIF system, indicating they were still in public schools in Philadelphia. We were left with 24 students, the others either still in special education or apparently dropped from the school district. Thirteen of the 25 were in the actual school the file data had indicated and had attended school frequently enough so that the teachers knew them this year.

We had addressed this sample originally to determine what proportion of full time LD students remained in the LD program and what proportion were found to be "no longer in need of Special Education." Because of the high rate of loss of information, we concluded that we could not address this question. Many psychologists and IAs had said in their interviews that there was (as they knew it) a high dropout rate for high school LD students. This was confirmed by Administrative and Survey Research reports (from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation). Therefore, we concluded that dropping out or moving away may explain most of the decline in numbers of LD students in high school compared to junior high.

The summary of 13 interviews are presented, not because they shed light on the original question, but they do tend to indicate that some of the students who were once LD students do manage in regular education programs, but still need the same types of help they had needed.

Of the 13 students identified as no longer L.D., six were reported to be working satisfactorily when compared to their peers, four were not working satisfactorily and three were cited as not working up to their potential.

With regard to learning difficulties, four of the six who were making satisfactory progress exhibited no difficulty in learning. The other two were reported to need individualized attention and to have had problems concentrating or retaining information. For those who showed no satisfactory progress, one did no classwork, one was so far behind until it was impossible for classwork to be done, one obviously never studied, and one had a problem with verbal expression. A negative attitude toward working or lack of motivation was indicated as the learning difficulties for the three students who were not working up to their potential.

For the students whose work was satisfactory, three of them needed no special help. One each required individualized explanations, individualized reinforment and assistance in structuring work. Of the four who were not working satisfactorily, two never responded in class and one each required individualized explanations and unspecified special help. For those students who were not working up to their potential, two required supplementary work and one needed no special help.

Behavior was indicated as a problem for only two of the students and these were not working up to their potential. The particular problems cited were distracting others and not facing up to responsibility for one's own behavior. All other students were not reported to have been difficult to manage in class.

Instruction or service that was not possible to provide in a regular classroom setting was indicated as being needed by eight of the 13 students who were no longer LD. Three of them required a smaller group setting, two needed tutoring, one needed individualized attention, one needed resource room support and one required counseling. For the remaining five students, no other kinds of instruction, instructional settings or service were necessary.

Two Concurrent Studies of Characteristics of LD Students

In an effort to investigate further characteristics which might distinguish LD students from non-LD students, data were obtained about students on two instruments. One was the "Initial Screening Checklist," and the other was a self-perception survey "Individual Achievement Responsibility Scale."

1. Initial Screening Checklist

The "Initial Screening Checklist" (ISC) was studied for its applicability to the School District. In an unpublished study, it was found that its 45 items could be grouped into stable categories. The ISC is comprised of behavior statements which the teacher rates for a student on a five point scale:

1="never," 2="rarely," 3="occasionally," 4="often," and5="very often."

The study also showed that the ISC could be used to help distinguish mildly handicapped from non-handicapped students. Apart from these technical aspects, we explored the items to see which were rated in such a way so as to suggest behaviors more typical of LD students than non-LD students.

On the average, data from the earlier study suggested that the average rating of an item for a regular education student was "never" while LD students' ratings were between "rarely" and "occasionally." For the most part, the differences in ratings were not large, nor were most LD students' inappropriate behavior severe (on the average).

The students had been categorized in four "levels" to distinguish their ages. The levels represented: 1) ages 5 years to 8 years, 2) 8 to 11 years, 3) 11 to 14 years, and 4) 14 to 21 years of age.

The next step was to rank the items (from high to low) by the size of the difference in average rating between LD and regular education students for each age group. The top 10 from each group were then listed according to the number of groups they appeared in, as displayed on the next page.

TABLE 21

ITEMS WHICH SEEM TO DISTINGUISH LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS FROM REGULAR EDUCATION STUDENTS AS REPORTED BY TEACHERS ON THE INITIAL SCREENING CHECKLIST

1. Items found to distinguish for all age groups 1 through 4		
#3 Overreacts to criticism	(Acting Out)	
#7 Gets flustered and confused when told to follow directions	(Neurological Deficits)	
#17 Confuses the order of events when telling about something that happened	(Neurological Deficits)	
#18 Seems restless and unable to sit	(No Factor Loading)	
#30 Interrupts your activities or the activities of others	(Acting Out)	
#31 Tells lies to avoid punishment	(Acting Out)	
2. Items found to distinguish for three of four age groups		Groups
#5 Confuses directions such as right, left, up, down	(Neurological Deficits)	1,2,3
#32 Incorrectly budgets his/her time when time limits have been established	(Attention Problems)	1,2,4
#38 Lacks tolerance for other's mistakes	(No Factor Loading)	2,3,4
3. Items found to distinguish for two of four age groups		Groups
#2 Demands that things are done his/her way	(Acting Out)	1,4
#9 Expresses dissatisfaction with self or the quality of his/her work	(Inadequacy)	3,4
#16 Uses pencils, crayons, scissors, or knife, fork and spoon awkwardly	(No Factor Loading)	1,2
#24 Misbehaves because friends tell him/her to	(No Factor Loading)	3,4
#29 Stares into space or seems preoccupied	(Introverted/Depressed, Neurological Deficits, Attention Problems)	1,2
#33 Fights with other children	(Acting Out)	3,4
#36 Seems nervous, jittery, jumpy, and easily startled	(No Factor Loading)	2,4

Since the earlier study had identified categories (called factors) in which items could be grouped, the names of the factors to which the items belong were also provided on the list. The listing was in three parts which were separated by the lines across the page (see Table 21).

This listing appears similar to the one obtained from interviews with teachers. In fact, it can be said that characteristic "problems" of LD students are also behaviors which tend to distinguish LD students from those of regular education students in our schools.

The LD students tended to be different from regular education students, most of their behaviors falling into two factors which were called "Neurological Deficits" and "Acting Out." Teachers tended to see the LD students as more confused when required to follow directions or in describing the order in which things happened, or simply as confusing directions such as up, down, left or right. Teachers saw the LD students as over reacting to criticism, telling lies to avoid punishment, interrupting activities, and more prone to fighting (11 years or older).

Teachers saw the LD students as more restless, unable to sit, lacking tolerance for other's mistakes, and in the early years, to stare into space more often or seem preoccupied.

In the current study, 186 teachers provided ISC ratings, and 15 of these were for students no longer LD. The analysis presented below considers only the LD students. The question posed was to determine whether the behavior ratings could be used to distinguish between LD students assigned to Resource Rooms from LD students assigned to Full Time classes. Since the ISC allows the teacher to rate 45 behavior statements from "1" ("never") to "5" ("very often"), if all items were rated, a minimum score would be 45, and a maximum score would be 225.

The Age Group of the students were as follows;

Age Group 1 = under 8 years

Age Group 2 = 8 years to 11 years

Age Group 3 = 11+ years to 14 years

Age Group 4 = 14+ years or more

Due to the limited numbers of Age Group 1 students in the returned ISC data, they were combined with Age Group 2, representing mostly Elementary school students.

The average total rating was computed for Full Time and Resource Room students for Age Group 1 and 2 combined. The difference in the scores was statistically significant, with 11 Resource Room students having an average rating of 69, and 35 Full Time students having an average rating of 99.

For Age Group 3 and 4, the differences in average rating were not statistically different when Resource Room students were compared to Full Time students.

A second question was posed, which sought to determine the percentage of the LD students who would have been selected as LD based strictly on a "cutoff" score derived from the original study of the ISC. Table 22 shows the percentage of LD students who were correctly identified by the ISC as being LD in the original study and the proportion of the current LD sample correctly identified by the ISC.

TABLE 22

Proportions of LD Students Correctly Identified by the ISC as Being Learning Disabled

Age Group	Original Study	Current Study
1	67%	(2 of 4)
2	67%	60% (of 42)
3	73%	52% (of 86)
4	78%	75% (of 53)

The comparisons for Age Groups 2 and 4 were relatively close, but not for Age Group 3. Here there was 31% fewer students in the current sample correctly identified by the ISC than in the original study. Whether this would suggest that the nature of the sample was quite different due to sampling (as a procedure) differences, or that the population now has different characteristics than they had three years earlier must be left to further study.

In review, statements on the ISC which tended to characterize LD students were similar to the ones the teachers offered in their interviews. The ISC could be used to distinguish recommended assignments of students in Elementary school (Resource Room or Full Time classes). The ISC ratings suggest that a smaller proportion of the current sample of students would meet the "cutoff score" criterion now compared to students in the sample for the study conducted three years earlier (most notable at the Junior High School level).

2. Students' Feelings of Responsibility for Achievement

A second parallel study conducted explored whether another instrument might show a relationship between the student's current assignments and the degree to which they feel responsible for their own achievement. The Individual Achievement Responsibility Scale was selected because it had been previously demonstrated to have a high face validity. One hundred sixty-one (161) returned scales were available for the analysis.

The reason the relationship was explored was because of suggestions in the literature that higher achieving students took more responsibility for achieve than did lower achieving students. Data in Table 23 show the average responsibility for achievement (17 items) was 11.7 for Full Time students and 12.6 for Resource Room students. The difference was statistically significant (probability was less than .01).

TABLE 23

THE INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT RESPONSIBILITY SCALE
FULL TIME AND RESOURCE ROOM LD STUDENTS

Assignment	Number	Responsibility for Achievement			
		Positive		Negative	
		Average	S.D.*	Average	S.D.
Full Time	117	11.7	2.2	10.6	2.8
Resource Room	44	12.6	2.0	11.3	2.6

* Standard Deviation

The data also show that Resource Room students take slightly more responsibility for the negative aspects when they do not achieve, but here the difference was not statistically significant. (The possible number of negative items was 16. An error in printing one item invalidated its inclusion in the analysis.)

Thus Resource Room students do assume more responsibility for their achievement than do Full Time LD students in both negative and positive aspects. The difference in "positive" scores could distinguish among the two groups, but the difference in "negative" scores could not.

What Did Parents Say About Learning Disabilities?

This section presents the findings, first for the mail survey, and second for the telephone survey. The telephone survey was a random sample of one-fourth of the whole sample of parents. The dual procedure allowed cross validation of information, and verbal elaboration of issues.

1. Summary of Parent Opinion Mail Survey

The Parent Opinion Survey regarding the Learning Disability Program was sent to 675 parents. Two hundred thirteen (213) were returned (a rate of return of 32%).

The survey responses were analyzed in two parts, one providing background about the children, and the second providing a rating of the LD program. The surveys were coded so that responses could be identified by the administrative subdistrict.

The children represented a wide range of ages, from 5 to 20 years old. Some of the children had been identified as having a learning disability through the preschool program they attended. Some subsequently began receiving special education in kindergarten, while others (through PEACH) had begun receiving special services prior to that.

Forty percent of the children had attended a preschool program (such as Get Set and Head Start). A full 85% of them had attended kindergarten, and 53% had repeated a grade prior to starting the LD program. Preschool experience was as high as 50% for students in Districts 1 and 6. Kindergarten experience was as high as 100% in District 7. Repeating a grade was as high as 71% in District 1.

TABLE 24

Summary of the Children's Prior Experiences

District	Number Responses	Age Now	Child Attended		Repeated A Grade	Grade in Which Child Began LD Program
			Preschool	Kinder-Garten		
1	21	9-17	10	17	15	1-7
2	16	9-20	5	10	8	PK-9
4	18	5-15	8	16	9	K-8
5	37	7-19	12	27	24	PK-7
6	34	8-13	17	27	19	K-9
7	35	6-17	13	35	18	PK-7
8	52	6-20	20	48	25	1-10
Total City	213	5-20	85 (40%)	180 (85%)	118 (53%)	PK-10

These data support the conclusions that LD students have been in early educational programs or have been identified as needing educational help by their school. Those experiences and additional time to adjust to educational classes did not resolve their learning difficulties.

Forty-one percent of the parents said the school first suspected their children had learning difficulties, 38% felt both the school and they first suspected it, 19% felt they alone first suspected it, and only 2% identified another agency as first suspecting the children's learning disability. Thus, school people have been primary agents in identifying learning difficulties.

Thirty-one percent of the parents reported that the people at school had tried to provide other kinds of help to the children prior to recommending them for special education. Ninety-two percent reported that, at the time, they felt placing their child in the LD program was the best thing to do.

Forty percent of the parents rated the LD program with a mark (or grade) of A. Another 29% gave it a B, 28% a C, 3% a D, and 1/2% an F. In other words, 69% were positive in their rating, while only 3½% were negative.

Two attributes most favorably rated by parents were 1) their child received more attention by the LD teacher than they had previously, and 2) their child was learning better in the LD classes. Eighty-two percent felt their child was understood better by the LD teachers. Seventy-seven percent felt they were better informed about their child's progress, and 71% felt their child was now better able to cope with their learning difficulties.

Sixty-two percent felt their child would now have a better chance to graduate, but many said it was too early to tell. Fifty-two percent thought the LD teacher helped their child behave better, but many indicated that their child had never been a behavior problem(a finding supported by other data gathered through this study). Only 41% felt their child got along better with friends now. Many parents indicated that their child seemed always to have had friends, and others said they did not know.

Many notes and letters were sent in with the surveys. Some parents explained that had it not been for the LD program, their child would have had no other way to obtain help. One parent pointed out that there were few outside activities directed for children with serious learning disabilities. Some indicated that they were unhappy their child had to be "labeled" to get help; that other kids teased them. Parents were usually hopeful, and saw the child's return to regular education with "resource room help" to be indicative of real progress.

TABLE 25

Parent Opinion Survey of the Learning Disability Program

Summary of Parent Satisfaction

Responses	Number Responding by District 1	2	4	5	6	7	8	Total N=213	Percent Responding
A. Because of the LD program I think my child:									
1. receives more attention	20	14	13	29	27	34	50	187	89%
2. has less pressure	15	13	14	26	31	31	44	174	82%
3. behaves better	13	10	6	26	18	17	20	110	52%
4. is better understood	17	14	12	29	29	30	39	170	80%
5. has learned better	18	15	14	28	27	33	50	185	87%
6. is likely to have school success or graduate	12	11	14	20	22	24	29	132	62%
7. copes better with learning problems	17	11	12	29	28	24	31	152	71%
8. gets along better with friends	10	7	6	22	14	20	18	87	41%
B. The LD teacher keeps me informed	17	12	13	30	27	29	35	163	77%

TABLE 26

Parent Opinion Survey of the Learning Disability Program

Summary of Overall Rating

Grade given by parents	District 1	2	4	5	6	7	8	Total (N=198)	#Percent Responding
A	9	8	7	10	9	16	19	78	39%
B	2	3	6	14	11	9	13	58	29%
C	7	4	4	6	11	7	16	55	28%
D	0	1	0	1	3	0	1	6	3%
F	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	5%

*198 parents responded with a letter grade, 15 did not.
Percentages were calculated based only on the number giving a letter grade.

2. Summary of Parent Opinion Telephone Survey

A telephone survey was conducted to ascertain parents' opinions of the LD program. One-hundred-ninety-nine (199) parents were called. Some parents could not be reached due to telephone disconnections, number changes, not being home after two day and two evening attempts, or inconsistencies in number provided and party reached. As a result, 119 (60%) responded to the telephone survey.

The telephone survey responses were analyzed in two parts. Part one provided specific information about the children in the program and part two provided an evaluative rating of the LD program. The responses were summarized and analyzed by district.

Students ages ranged from 6 to 20 years old. Forty-six percent of the children attended a preschool program while 91% attended Kindergarten. In some cases, learning problems were suspected as early as preschool and placements in LD programs were made as early as Kindergarten.

Fifty-four percent of the children were in grades 2, 3, or 4 when they were placed in the LD program. Retention in grade was experienced by 55% of the children. District 4 retained the lowest proportion (23%) of its sampled population and Districts 2 and 7 retained highest proportions (73% and 70%) of the sampled population.

The data were consistent with the mail survey in showing that LD students generally have had early educational programs and were usually identified as needing special education before leaving the 4th grade. However, early school experience and additional time spent in grade did not resolve the learning problems in most cases.

Sixty percent of the parents said the school first suspected their children had learning difficulties, 28% said they first suspected it, 16% felt that both the school and they suspected it, and 3% did not respond. These data support the conclusion that school personnel are primarily responsible for the identification of learning difficulties.

TABLE 27

Parent Opinion Telephone Survey
Summary of the Children's Prior Experiences

District	Number Responses	Age Now	Child Attended		Repeated A Grade	Grade in Which Child Began LD Program
			Preschool	Kinder-garten		
1	12	9-15	7	10	5	1-5
2	15	8-17	3	13	11	2-8
4	13	10-18	8	10	3	2-8
5	11	8-19	0	11	4	K-10
6	22	8-17	14	20	10	PK-7
7	23	6-20	9	22	16	K-9
8	23	8-17	9	22	14	K-10
Total City	119	6-20	50 (42%)	108 (91%)	63 (53%)	PK-10

Twenty-seven percent of the parents said that the school had tried to offer help (i.e., tutoring, remediation, etc.) prior to recommending special education. Eighty-three percent stated that they felt placing their child in an LD program was the best thing to do at the time.

Parents were asked to give an overall rating of the LD program in the form of a letter grade. Forty-five percent gave the LD program an A, 30% gave it a B, 24% gave it a C and 4% gave it a D. Only 3% of the parents gave the program an F. Overall, 75% of the parents rated the program positively and 7% rated it negatively.

When asked whether they felt their child received more attention from the LD teachers than they had from regular teachers, eighty percent of the parents said yes. Eighty-seven percent felt their children were more likely to succeed in school or graduate from high school as a result of having been in an LD program. Seventy-six percent of the parents expressed these favorable impressions of the LD placement: there was less pressure on their children, their children learned better, and their children were better able to deal with their learning problems. In 75% of the cases, parents felt their children were better understood by LD teachers, and the LD teachers kept them informed about their children's progress.

With regard to behavior and sociability, 56% of the parents felt the LD teachers helped to improve their children's behavior and 55% felt their children got along better with the other kids in school. Some parents felt behavior was never a problem while others indicated their children never had problems making or keeping friends.

During the telephone survey, many of the parents made comments and shared other issues about the LD program. Some parents complained that their LD children were frequently excluded from extra curricular-type activities. A few parents whose children had specifically diagnosed learning disabilities felt there should have been different classes for children with unspecified learning problems,

TABLE 28

Parent Opinion Telephone Survey of the Learning Disability Program

Summary of Parent Satisfaction

Responses	Number Responding by District							Total	Percent Responding
	1	2	4	5	6	7	8	N=119	
A. Because of the LD program, I think my child:									
1. receives more attention	10	12	10	7	15	19	22	95	80%
2. has less pressure	11	12	10	7	17	16	20	91	76%
3. behaves better in class	5	8	9	8	9	8	17	64	54%
4. is better understood	10	12	12	5	17	16	17	89	75%
5. learns better	9	11	11	8	16	16	19	90	76%
6. is more likely to be successful in school or graduate	10	13	11	6	17	19	18	94	79%
7. copes better with learning problems	10	12	11	9	12	18	19	91	76%
8. gets along better with friends	8	10	6	5	12	11	13	65	55%
B. The LD teacher keeps me informed	9	10	9	8	16	18	19	89	75%

TABLE 29

Parent Opinion Telephone Survey of the Learning Disability Program

Summary of Overall Quality

Grade given by parents	District 1	2	4	5	6	7	8	Total (N=112)	*Percent Grading
A	3	8	5	6	6	9	11	48	43%
B	5	4	5	1	10	3	8	36	32%
C	2	3	2	1	4	8	2	22	20%
D	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	2%
F	-	-	1	-	-	2	1	4	4%

*112 of the 119 parents responded with a letter grade.

emotional problems, or behavior problems. Other parents, though satisfied with the LD program, felt their children had been in it too long. Generally, most parents felt the the LD program had helped their children and were optimistic about their continued progress and future success.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The five years of data on Full Time assignments has shown that while the Educable Mentally Retarded population is declining, and the Socially/Emotionally Disturbed population is varying slightly, the Learning Disabilities population is increasing rapidly. Literature suggests that this is a national phenomenon and has been found applicable to the School District of Philadelphia.

The School District draws Learning Disabled students from public, parochial, and private schools. When public and parochial school populations were considered, the rate of Learning Disabilities identification stood at 4% of the population. Combined racial distribution of the two school systems tended to indicate that the Learning Disabilities population tended to place a higher proportion of Black students and a lower proportion of White students, contrary to comparisons only within public school figures.

The sex distribution of Learning Disabled students was 28% girls and 72% boys. The largest proportion by age of Learning Disabled students tended to be concentrated at the Junior High school years. Ninety-four percent (94%) of the LD students in the sample had at least one or more IQ scores at or above 80. Six percent of the Learning Disabled had no IQ measure above 80. IQ scores tended to rise by 2 points on the Verbal IQ score, but fall by 3 points on the Performance score, and fall by 1 point on the Full Scale IQ score. But for those whose Full Scale IQ was less than 80, all second measures of IQ tended to decline by 1.5 to 5 points on the average.

Many theorists and practitioners suggest that there are distinct types of Learning Disabilities, and thus it is incongruous to treat the population as though it had typical problem characteristics. It was found, however, that Child Study Evaluation Team members (apparently) focused upon the identification of some dysfunction within the students. Whether such dysfunction

was sufficient to cause a severe inablility to learn basic skills was apparently assessed by the size of the discrepancy between students' expected grade level and actual achievement level, taking peers' achievement levels into account.

Instructional advisors and psychologists indicated that they could distinguish between "slow learners" and "Learning Disabled" students, but over half of each group said they would recommend a student to a Learning Disabilities program if that were the only way to obtain help for a student.

Differences in the degree of inappropriate behavior could account for differences in Full Time and Resource Room assignments for Elementary level students. Differences in the degree of discrepancy between grade and achievement could account for differences in the assignments of upper Elementary and Junior High School Learning Disabled students.

Teachers of Learning Disabled students tended to describe the students' problems as an inability to learn (especially in reading or related aspects of reading), and having poor attitudes and poor self-concepts. They indicated three major things they did for their students was to motivate them, work one-on-one or in small groups, and constantly keep them on task.

Parents indicated that about 40% of the Learning Disabled had attended preschool, about 90% had attended Kindergarten, and 53% had repeated at least one grade. Parents were quite favorably disposed toward the Learning Disabilities programs, although some did not realize that Resource Rooms were a special education service, and some pointed out that it was too bad their children had to be labeled in order to obtain program services because of peer teasing or feelings of inadequacy. Many parents (40% to 60%) said that the "school" had been the first to suspect their children had learning problems, while 38% to 28% said they and the "school" had first suspected it.

Sixty-eight percent to 75% of the parents rated the program for their children with a letter grade of "A" or "B."

In conclusion, the Learning Disabilities category of Special Education is defined broadly. Specific criteria are generally absent, or perhaps appropriately, cannot be defined for a group but can be defined for subgroups. However, as selection criteria are practiced, many students at the borderline of normal intelligence could qualify for the Learning Disabilities programs. Most of these students will appear bright in some areas and not able in others, which seems to characterize the general distinction between "slow learners" and the Learning Disabled. The paucity of other avenues of help in remedial, developmental, or motivational classes seems to have placed stress on the identification procedures which are not more specific.

Since one of the "tools" in the identification of the Learning Disabled is an IQ test, and its measure of intelligence is questioned when applied to Learning Disabled students, IQ scores do not provide a solid basis for estimating Learning Disabled students' real potential. On the other hand, it seems unreasonable to assume that students who are in the normal range of intelligence should all achieve at expected grade level, whether they are "slow learners" or Learning Disabled. Those who are at the low borderline end of the range predictably would be achieving lower than 80% of the normal and above normal students.

While one approach to stabilize the Learning Disabled population would be to clarify the criteria, there are many theoretical, practical, and legal difficulties to overcome. Another approach would be to lessen the pressure on the selection of Learning Disabled students by providing regular education options for students to realize their potentials in the existing system.

Questions for Consideration

In reflecting back over the study, a number of questions arose which are posed here.

1. How much of the current paperwork is necessary to (a) satisfy requirements and (b) to provide information to those working with the students? Can the forms be simplified?

   CSET documents were rather lengthy and complex in elementary schools, though folders were in varying states of completeness and documents were in varying states of comprehensiveness. Folders of CSET data were much more complicated at the high school level. Counselors told us that the amount of paperwork for special education students consumed an inordinate amount of time which often meant they could not counsel students.

2. What regular education options can be made available for students of low-average to average intelligence who are not doing well in school?

   Such remedial and motivational options might provide the early stages of help for students who are struggling. Some authors have suggested that students who do not respond to such remedial and motivational offerings are the ones who will need to be considered for special education assignments.

3. Can the school district develop uniform criteria for the identification of Learning Disabled students if the category is multidimensional (not characterized by one type but by three or four types of problems)?

   If one were to decide that an identification of the nature of the learning disorder was of primary importance, this could continue to be a difficult process. Alternatives could lie in standardizing behavior screening forms and amounts of discrepancies between predicted achievement (based on IQ) and actual achievement scores, as well as exclusionary criteria, such as

absences from school. A third method might be even simpler, which is to require remedial and/or motivational regular education options first, and then for those students who do not benefit, consider special education identification.

4. If Learning Disabled students became (in practice) those who did not benefit from regular education remedial and/or motivational options, then what would the instructional strategies used by the special education teachers be?

   Current education strategies for LD students were reported to be small classes, repeated instruction, and motivation. If these were the focus of remedial and motivational teachers within regular education, and they did not benefit the student, would it be more appropriate to do more of the same or to approach the learning difficulties from an entirely different perspective?

5. Why are boys in the educational setting identified more frequently as having behavior and learning problems?

   We noticed that 82% of our Socially/Emotionally Disturbed students were boys. We reported that over 70% of the Learning Disabled were boys, but we observed only 51% of the Educable Mentally Retarded were boys. The latter is in line with birth rate figures, but the more that behavior adjustment becomes a characteristic of an exceptionality, the higher the incidence of boys in that category.

APPENDIX A

Samples of Comments on SEH-75 Forms
Districts 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8

COMMENTS ON THE SEH-75 District 1

"Child is having difficulty with kindergarten level work, has repeated kindergarten, and is still unable to do the work--counting, colors, letter recognition, vocabulary, visual memory, comprehension below average, has good school "adjustment" and attendance." "_____is most helpful student, eager to learn and tries hard."

"Below grade level academically, poor comprehension."

"Reading, language and math skills well below average; abstract visual problems."

"Deficit in verbal, language related areas, daydreams, involves himself in others' misbehaviors during lesson, becomes frustrated with new work, is easily distracted."

"Short attention span, low frustration tolerance, uncoordinated motor skills, difficulty in language expression."

"Distractable, impulsive, immature."

"Difficulty with work, cognitive difficulty with many reading skills."

"Mother thinks son has learning problem, older brotner was in LD classes, child is immature, has short attention span and academic deficiencies."

"Not learning in regular school setting, poor behavior, defective speech, impulsive behavior, aggressiveness, can't take pressure."

"Child not working on grade level; has a short attention span."

"Child is having difficulty in all subject areas, in copying from the board, and in retaining 1st. grade skills. Child's grades don't reflect his ability."

"Repeated grades 1 and 2, reading at preprimer level, poor academic performance, deficit in perceptual abilities, particularly motor things."

"Not enough reading skills to be promoted, needs class supervision to perform tasks."

"Small attention span."

"Totally unable to do or comprehend what is expected of him in Title I reading class. Very poor acheivement and adjustment, not a behavior problem. Has a speech problem. Others make fun of him. Willing but unable."

"Poor social adjustment, fighting with peers nearly everyday. Rarely pays attention, gets confused easily in following directions. Easily distracted, very moody. Failing to achieve, unable to follow simple directions unless they are repeated over and over! Difficulty handling feelings."

"Failing all subjects, no motivation."

"Below grade in skills."

"Achievement minimal, adjustment poor, daydreams, verbal and physical abuse."

"Low performance--is he LD? Why was he moved out of EMR? Quiet in class,"strains to follow what is going on. Very poor reader. Has difficulty grasping skills taught in classroom."

COMMENTS ON THE SEH-75 District 2

"Easily distracted; often gets into disputes with classmates, not progressing."

"Restlessness, distractibility, poor motor coordination"

"She was a very low performing child with inconsistent effort."

"Achievement levels were far below grade level and no improvement being made as of 5th Grade Benchmark student."

"Hyperactive behavior, poor achievement."

"Academic difficulty (2nd percentile language and math) and immature."

"Progress not satisfactory in Checkpoint (4th school attended), 1st grade performance in grade 3; pre-primer and reads two words."

"Poor achievement despite remedial help."

"First referred in 1979 for excessive absence--poor achievement."

"Working at frustration level in all areas."

"Made very slow inconsistent progress in Kindergarten, only sporadic retention of information."

"Difficulty with 5th grade work--does no work--behavior problem."

"Learning is inconsitent; doesn't remember prior information."

"Functions poorly in class;is immature with poor self image and no motivation."

"Mother requested special education placement because he was in special education program in South Carolina."

"Low achiever, short attention span."

"High absence rate, lack of achievement, behavior problem."

"Working below grade level."

"Not verbal--appears to be slow learner."

"Sharon was very much below grade level in reading and math skills."

PARENTAL REQUEST--"Performing poorly in school, history of failure."

"Lags behind others in reading and math."

"Lack of academic and social growth."

"Unusual behavior--sleeps, short attention span, poor reading skills, aggressive, gets into fights."

"Having difficulty doing basic math--cannot read pre-primer--bilingual child."

"Difficulty learning -unable to grasp simple verbal or math concepts-ESOL child."

COMMENTS ON SEH-75 District 4

"Not working at grade level, inattentive, temper, emotional immaturity."

"Unsatisfactory academic progress, immature behavior"

"Below grade level, little school progress."

"Too many absences, when present he comes late, very little academic progress."

"Very disruptive, making very slow progress, poor social adjustment, talks to himself and makes noises most of the time."

"Difficulty with classroom work despite "trying hard", inability to concentrate even in 1 to 1 situations."

"Poor academic achievement, difficulty of social adjustment, behavior."

"Serious threat to other children and himself- fights- not prepared to come to school- throws books- slow academic progress."

"Physically and verbally abusive to other students- unable to work more than five minutes at a time on a single task."

"Underachievement, passive, difficulty with verbal expression, communication, also perceptual difficulties."

"Repeating 3rd gr., working below grade level in math and reading."

"Learning problems, can't write name, etc., easily frustrated, reluctant to accept help from teacher."

"17 transfers since 1976; he has a learning problem."

"Child was referred at mother's request for psychological evaluation because of slow academic progress and dislike of or indifference to school. "

"Academic deficiencies and casual attitude."

"Slow in giving responses, mixes letters and words, lowest part of class, cannot follow directions."

"Developmental delay--referred from Pre-kindergarten program."

"Slow rate of progress--poor skills."

"Emotional problems--tattles and lies, needs lots of individual attention."

"Immature- reading below grade level- cries easily."

"Daydreams, complains about 'feelings' concentrates only when receiving individual attention- weak in math."

"Difficulties in Math, reversals in reading."

"Immature, poor attention span, lack of concentration, doesn't try."

"Difficulty remembering what he has learned."

COMMENTS ON SEH-75 District 5

"She shows poor achievement and needs a special setting."

"Does not have good self-hygiene behavior, is below expected performance levels, very immature."

"Confuses oral information, word order, and has a mild articulation problem."

"He has very low achievement, has already repeated a grade."

"Does not involve himself in clasroom activities, only do what he wanted, lie down on floor and stay there, not pay attention to lesson or story, difficulty with coloring and printing, fighting, small child, acts immature, difficulty finding words to name things."

"Short attention span, inability to adjust."

"Retarded in school skills."

"Has little verbal communication, does not seem to socialize with peers, problems with task completion, does not follow directions, poor handwriting and coordination."

"Very slow in grasping basic sight vocabulary and numerical concepts. He is immature and has much difficulty with following directions. He appears to be hyperactive."

"Cannot follow directions,does not volunteer, speech is very difficult to understand when she speaks."

"He is basically a non-reader. Can only recognize a few pre-primer words. "

"Slow progress in all academic areas, has short attention span and demonstrates difficulty in working alone. Shows signs of immaturity."

"Having difficulty with learning to read." (speaks Spanish at home.)

"Still working on Reading Readiness skill. He does not know the alphabet, unable to follow directions, and has difficulty focusing on his environment."

"Writes slowly,6's and d's are backward, spacing disproportinate, repeating 1st grade-tries hard- cries easily- difficulty in finishing work and work independently."

"Failing, unable to cope."

"Making little progress in class; poor memory for basic skill, numbers, colors, and sizes."

"Confused right-left dominance- always fighting and misbehaving- behavior problems."

"Won't talk or work, throws tantrums, won't hold pencil, difficulty in structuring an oral sentence."

"She is a transfer from California and was in special education there. Father is chronic alcoholic. From a broken family."

"Difficulty in retaining information, overly shy, fearful and unhappy. When using book or worksheet, it usually is upside down."

COMMENTS ON SEH-75 District 6

"Poor academic performance and some trouble with temper outbursts and cutting class."

"Teacher says child has very difficult time working independently, short attention span. Hard to get him to raise hand in class before speaking."

"Very low academic performance, seems to have mental block for learning."

"Does not learn basic skills, does not understand or follow directions, poor attention."

"Poor classroom achievement, attention, lacks self control, easily distracted, on the move all the time, careless, can't work independently."

"Slow progress, has difficulty following directions, mind is often on other things, difficulty controlling her behavior, poor self image, needs structure."

"Having problems in school work, repeated twice, still having difficulty."

"It appears Audrey is having difficulty in reading."

"The child exhibits almost no ability to decode."

"Functioning two years below grade level in math and reading, frustrated by assignments."

"Poor recall, barely grasps basic concepts."

"Unsatisfactory academic progress in reading."

"Child is not passing any academic subject. Appeared sad, subdued, withdrawn, and unable to express herself openly."

"Hyperactivity, inattentive and disruptive in the classroom."

"School work has taken a downswing, cannot decode or retain, poor expressive language, concentration and day-dreaming are apparent, he is an underachiever."

"She is doing poorly in school."

"Poor performance--lacks achievement and class participation."

"Makes slow progress, seldom completes her work, can't follow directions."

"Lacks self-control. Has poor attitude. Frustrates easily."

"She has difficulty acquiring and retaining new concepts."

"He is dependent, lethargic,cannot follow directions, his speech is defective, performs all tasks at the 4½ level--nothing at the 8 year stage. Cannot keep still, not interested in school or classroom activity."

"Inability to achieve-- distracted by everything and everyone--unable to keep up."

"Poor academic achievement, gross motor problems, and poor peer relations and poor school attendance."

COMMENTS ON SEH-75 District 7

"Unable to do work at grade level, needsimprovement in memory process, weak retention."

"Retained in 1st and 3rd grades, skills still below grade level."

"Failure to achieve scholastically. Inability to follow rules and tackle assignments. "

"Working below other students in class."

"Difficulty with normal classwork;can't do independent work, poor speech-- immaturity evident."

"Slow or no progress; very emotional, cries easily, little or no achievement."

"Much more than extremely slow, severely low in ability in academic skills, reading = 1st grade, math= below 1st grade."

"Daydreams and lacks concentration, can't follow directions, school achievement in reading is poor, math is OK."

"Appeared to have had a learning problem. Short attention span. Repeated 2nd grade and still had problem with skills. Poor self image. Potential for better. Needs improvement in academic areas. Inattentive during reading and other lessons."

"Repeating 1st grade, but still unable to master basic readiness skills, (writing alphabet, counting, etc.)

"Classroom behavior is poor. Doesn't complete work. On repeated material she doesn't know work."

"Academic difficulty, unable to do any written assignments and cannot follow directions for written work. She can copy from the board, but has trouble with spacing and reversing of letters and words. Friendly and cooperative."

"Couldn't do anything. Couldn't tie shoes, count, read."

"Withdrawn, rarely speaks to adults, slowness in completing school work."

"Behind the rest of the class. Child at readiness level in all subjects. Great immaturity, during the beginning of her first grade experience she would cry, scream, or run out looking for mother."

"Not responsive to first grade work. Confuses letters with numbers. Poor recall of academic work. Problems with "common sense" type math problems, short attention span and doesn't seek help."

"Extreme weaknesses especially in math and reading."

"Slow academic progress and behavioral control difficulty."

"Did no work in subject areas other than reading and math which are small group instruction; inattentive; works well 1:1."

"Child is not at all comprehending. He is timid, shy, and appears frightened in classroom. Very immature."

COMMENTS ON THE SEH-75 District 8

"Poor comprehension skills--poor mental computation, poor speech patterns, generally average skills."

"Problems in copying work from blackboard, short attention span, reversals--seems to be motivated--cooperates."

"Emotional problems, halting and indecisive in his work, poor speech."

"Difficulty in reading and spelling, questions regarding auditory perception."

"General low academic performance."

"Slow adademic development especially in Reading is beginning to have an affect on his behavior."

"Unable to function at grade level."

"Slow/below average progress."

"Making little gains in reading and math, speech problem."

"Child referred by herself because of problems learning."

"Below average by at least 2 years. Short attention span."

"Immature, does not finish work. Short attention span, hyperactive, hard time learning and listening. Good self image, but has doubts about abilities outside of family ."

"Erratic behavior in both work and social behavior. Good reading skills (above grade level) but weak math skills. Poor concentration, daydreams, poor organization of materials."

"Restless, short attention span, immaturity, problem with motor skills and letter reversals."

"Very slow academic progress, very disruptive, needs structured classroom setting."

"Very slow to follow directions, lacks confidence, weak skills."

"_____has made slow progress in reading and language arts-- consistently writes upside down or reverses."

"Slow academic progress, inattentive and not able to work independently."

"Poor adjustment to school discipline and adult authority. Unable to get along with classmates, and unacceptable behavior has become acute."

"Innappropriate behavior, low frustration tolerence."

"Has difficulty completing assignments. Is very restless. Fails to follow instructions. Is doing poorly in written test work."

"Has difficulty sitting still. Has short attention span. Can only complete very simple tasks independently."

APPENDIX B

Summary of Interviews with Psychologists

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS WITH PSYCHOLOGISTS

The total number of psychologists interviewed was 41 (we were unable to complete one interview). This represented about one-half of the assigned psychologists.

1. What criteria do you use to decide a student is LD?

The four most frequently mentioned criteria were:

a) Discrepancy between achievement and measured potential (19)

b) Perceptual-motor problems (15)

c) Indications of neurological dysfunctions (hyperactivity, attention problems, auditory perception problems, reversals, etc.) (12)

d) IQ in the average range (8)

Psychologists in some of the subdistricts more often referred to the potential vs achievement discrepancy factor, while other subdistrict psychologists referred to perceptual motor problems more frequently. All six psychologists in one subdistrict referred to neurological indicators, and only a few throughout all subdistricts mentioned looking for "soft signs".

2. What criteria do you use to decide a student is not achieving well enough?

Only two common responses were made by about 75% of the psychologists. These were:

a) Achievement is lower than potential (17), and

b) By comparing achievement to grade placements (13)

The responses did tend to follow subdistrict groups, but not so exclusively that one could assume a policy firmly guided one practice versus another. We made the assumption that "potential" was related to measured intelligence, while "grade placement" was related to years in school.

3. How do you use IQ scores in deciding whether or not a student is LD?

Twenty-four psychologists mentioned looking for a discrepancy among IQ subtests, between verbal and performance IQ's, or among the various standard tests included in the test battery.

Twelve psychologists mentioned looking for discrepancies between performance and potential. Also mentioned by 12 psychologists were observations of the child's general "response style" in terms of the quality of responses to questions.

Responses were fairly consistent among the seven districts.

4. Are there ever (or often) cases where a student's IQ score is below the normal range, but LD placement is still recommended? If so, what considerations lead to this?

None of the psychologists said they would not refer a child with a below average IQ if there were indications that the performance was depressed or they felt there were significant signs of higher potential than indicated by the various tests. Among the various indicators that were mentioned were:

a) Significant discrepancies between verbal and performance IQ's,

b) Perceptual motor problems

c) Language processing problems

d) Attention problems

5. In your mind, what characteristics seem to distinguish an LD student from one who is a "slow learner", (i.e. a student who is failing but is not LD)?

Twenty-seven of the psychologists responded that the major difference they found between slow learners and LD students was that the LD students demonstrated significant discrepancies between the WISC-R subtests or between verbal and performance IQ scores, or among the many tests used in CSET's test battery. Slow learners were described as having "flat" profiles and performing consistently low on all tests.

Another frequently mentioned difference was that LD students often demonstrated perceptual motor problems (12).

Responses were fairly consistent across all districts.

6. What criteria do you use to determine that a child is achieving much lower than his or her potential?

The response most frequently given was the "discrepancy between potential and actual achievement" (30).

This response was cited by most psychologists in all 7 districts.

7. Have you ever (or often) found it necessary to place students in an LD program because there was no other way to get help for them? If so, what are the considerations that lead to this?

Twenty said "yes," 17 said "no," and four did not give definite responses. The psychologists in two subdistricts tended to say that they would recommend LD placements for students needing help but not normally qualifying. Psychologists in three subdistricts tended to be clear that they would not do this, and in two other subdistricts these responses were half yes and half no.

8. What, if any, environmental factors do you take into consideration that might indicate a student who is not doing well is not really LD?

Twenty-five said they did consider environmental factors, while 14 said they did not. In five subdistricts, the majority of psychologists reported using this criterion to exclude children from LD placements. Among the environmental factors mentioned were parental abuse, neglect, frequent family moves.

9. Have you found any difference in reasons for referral between pupils found to need an LD placement and those found not to need an LD placement?

Eighteen said "yes," and 19 said "no." Psychologists in all districts were evenly split on this issue. Many of the "yes" responses, however, indicated that there were no differences most of the time (6) but that some teachers in some schools wrote up their referrals to distinguish "behavior problem" children from those with learning problems. In general the referrals apparently have not been consistently specific enough to provide psychologists with clues as to the nature of the problem.

10. When placing an LD student (or recommending a placement) for the first time, what characteristics make the difference in your decision between full time LD and resource room placement?

The most frequently identified response referred to the severity of the academic problems the child demonstrated (39 of the 41 respondents).

11. When re-teaming LD students, have you ever (or often) found that the lack of available room or programs have made it necessary to recommend students for full time placement when in fact you think they could move to a part time or resource room placement? Which resources were usually lacking in situations like this?

Only 7 said "yes," while 33 said "no," and one gave a different response. Staff in all districts consistently reported that they would not recommend a full time placement because the resources were not available. Several noted however, that the CSRC (Child Study Review Committee) may make placements other than the ones recommended by the CSET members. Additionally, several psychologists reported that, if anything, they would be more likely to recommend a part time placement at the secondary level because of the lack of full time classes. (The Adapted Curriculum and the Mixed Categorical part time classes tend to be most prevalent at the high school level.)

12. We have noticed a sudden drop off in the number of full time LD placements at the high school level. Can you offer any explanation why this is so?

Psychologists in all districts consistently attributed this to the implementation of part time classes using the Adapted Curriculum (23). The other frequently mentioned cause was that there was a high drop out rate among the special education secondary population (13). Possibly those who experience difficulty in learning tend to leave school at a higher rate than do others.

APPENDIX C

Summary of Interviews with Instructional Advisors

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS WITH INSTRUCTIONAL ADVISORS

There were 42 interviews with Instructional Advisors, or about one-third the total IAs.

1. What are the criteria you use most often in deciding whether a student needs an LD placement?

The most common criteria mentioned were:

a) Perceptual motor and neurological signs (Bender-Gestalt, auditory perception, and reversals in reading and/or writing) (33)

b) Large discrepancies between subtest scores, or verbal and performance IQ's, (17)

c) A gap between current achievement and potential (as measured by the IQ score) (16)

Staff in one subdistrict more frequently mentioned neurological and uneven performance patterns as their criteria. In two subdistricts, IAs most frequently mentioned neurological or uneven performance patterns, and social skills problems. In three subdistricts, the IAs frequently mentioned responses a and b (above). In one subdistrict, the two most frequently mentioned areas were neurological factors and the gap between the child's achievement and grade placement.

2. What criteria do you use in deciding whether a student is not achieving well enough?

The two most frequently cited criteria were:

a) Achievement below grade level (13)

b) Comparing potential to current achievement levels (8)

In one subdistrict, the IAs mentioned in addition that discussions with teachers were important. IAs in three subdistricts more frequently mentioned achievement below grade level than comparing the child's potential to achievement. In one subdistrict, the IAs simply identified the achievement tests they used as the criteria.

3. How do you use IQ scores in deciding whether or not a child is LD?

The three most frequently mentioned uses for the IQ score were:

a) Look for IQ to be in the average range (18)

b) Reliance upon the psychologist's assessment of the meaning of the IQ (15)

c) Looking for large subtest or verbal vs performance discrepancies. In one subdistrict all 6 IA's reported that they relied only on the psychologist's interpretation.

A variety of cutoff for normal intelligence were reported. In two subdistricts, IQ's above 90 were often cited as being in the normal range, while in the remaining districts, IQ's above 80 were mentioned as being in the normal range.

4. Are there ever (or often) cases where a child's IQ score is below normal range, but an LD placement is still recommended? If so, what are the considerations which lead to this?

IA's consistently responded that under specific circumstances they would refer children with below normal IQ's to an LD program. The reasons mentioned were as follows:

a) emotional factors (8)

b) significant subtest scatter (5)

c) hyperactive behavior (6)

Only two respondents said that they would not recommend any of these students for LD placements.

5. In your mind, what characteristics seem to distinguish an LD student from one who is a "slow learner," (i.e., a student who is failing but is not LD)?

The IA's gave the following 4 responses:

a) Identification of perceptual problems or neurological factors (20)

b) Uneven performance on the tests administered (12)

c) Attentional problems (9)

d) Student shows average intelligence (8)

The "slow learner" (implied or stated) would not evidence these characteristics.

6. What criteria do you use to determine that a child is achieving much lower than his or her potential?

The most frequently mentioned criterion was the use of the potential vs. current achievement discrepancy (16). Comparing a child's achievement to that of peers was mentioned 6 times while uneven skill levels was mentioned 5 times.

7. Have you ever (or often) found it necessary to place students in an LD program because there was no other way to get help for them? If so, what are the considerations that lead to this?

Twenty-two said "yes," 18 said "no," and one was ambivalent. Most IAs in three subdistricts more frequently responded "yes" while IAs in one subdistrict responded "no" most often. In the three remaining subdistricts, the IAs evenly divided on this question.

8. What, if any, environmental factors do you take into consideration that might indicate a child who is not doing well is not really LD?

To this question, 15 said they considered environmental factors while 20 said they did not.

9. Have you found any differences in reasons for referral between pupils found to need an LD placement and those found not to need an LD placement?

One third said "yes," and two thirds said "no." Of those replying "yes," just over half indicated that emotional and/or behavioral problems were more characteristic of the non-LD students referred.

10. When placing an LD student (or recommending a placement) for the first time, what characteristics make the difference in your decisions between full time LD and resource room placements?

Thirty-two of the 42 respondents said that the degree of discrepancy between current achievement and class level was the distinction utilized.

Five reported that they looked at the child's ability to function in his class. These responses were consistently reported throughout the seven districts.

11. When re-teaming LD students, have you ever (often) found that the lack of available room or programs have made it necessary to recommend students to full time placement when in fact you think they could move to a part time or resource room placement? Which resources were usually lacking in situations like this?

Only seven said "yes," while the remainder said "no." Five of the "no's" reported that the opposite was true, (i.e. they were more likely to place a child in a part time or R.R. setting because of the lack of full time classes).

12. We have noticed a sudden drop off in the number of full time LD placements at the high school level. Can you offer any explanation why this is so?

Twenty of the respondents indicated that the decline could be accounted for by either the LD students maturing and learning to cope with their disability better, or the fact that so many other high school students were functioning at low academic levels that the LD students were often able to return to regular classes.

Nineteen respondents indicated that the Adapted Curriculum and mixed categorical classes had reduced the need for LD students to be placed in full time settings. Ten felt that a high drop out rate accounted for the decline.

(Many respondents indicated more than one reason.)